

THE ARGOSY.

MAY 1, 1874.

IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EVE OF THE TRIAL.

WITHIN a week of Tom Bristow's first visit to Pincote, and his introduction to the Copes, father and son, Mr. Cope, Junior, found himself, much to his disgust, fairly on his way to New York. He would gladly have rebelled against the parental dictum in this matter, if he had dared to do so ; but he knew of old how worse than useless it would be for him to offer the slightest opposition to his father's wishes.

"You will go and say good-bye to Miss Culpepper as a matter of course," said Mr. Cope to him. "But don't grow too sentimental over the parting. Do it in an easy, smiling way, as if you were merely going out of town for a few days. Don't make any promises—don't talk about the future—and, above all, don't say a word about marriage. Of course, you will have to write to her occasionally while you are away. Just a few lines, you know, to say how you are, and all that. No mawkish silly love-nonsense, but a sensible, manly letter ; and be wisely reticent as to the date of your return. Very sorry, but you don't know how much longer your business may detain you—you know the sort of thing I mean."

When the idea had first entered Mr. Cope's mind that it would be an excellent thing if he could only succeed in getting his son engaged to Squire Culpepper's only child, it had not been without an ulterior eye to the fortune, which that young lady would one day call her own, that he had been induced to press forward the scheme to a successful issue. By marrying Miss Culpepper, his son would be enabled to take

up a position in county society such as he could never hope to attain either by his own merits, which were of the most moderate kind, or from his father's money bags alone. But dearly as Mr. Cope loved position, he loved money still better; and it was no part of his programme that his son should marry a pauper, even though that pauper could trace back her pedigree to the Conqueror. And yet, if the Squire went on speculating as madly as he was evidently doing now, it seemed only too probable that pauperism, or something very much like it, would be the result, as far as Miss Culpepper was concerned. Instead of having a fortune of a hundred thousand pounds, as she ought to have, would she come in for as many pence when the old man died? Mr. Cope groaned in spirit as he asked himself the question, and he became more determined than ever to carry out his policy of waiting and watching, before allowing the engagement of the young people to reach a point that would render a subsequent rupture impossible without open scandal—and scandal was a bugbear of which the banker stood in extreme dread.

Fortunately, perhaps, for Mr. Cope's view, the feelings of neither of the people chiefly concerned were very deeply interested. Edward had obeyed his father in this as in everything else. He had known Jane from a child, and he liked her because she was clever and good-tempered. But she by no means realized his ideal of feminine beauty. She was too slender, too slightly formed to meet with his approval. "There's not enough of her," was the way he put it to himself. Miss Moggs, the confectioner's daughter, with her ample proportions and beaming smile, was far more to his taste. Equally to his taste was the pastry dispensed by Miss Moggs's plump fingers, of which he used to devour enormous quantities, seated on a three-legged stool in front of the counter, while chatting in a free and easy way about his horses and dogs, and the number of pigeons he had slaughtered of late. And then it was so much easier to talk to Miss Moggs than it was to talk to Jane. Miss Moggs looked up to him as to a young magnifico, and listened to his oracular utterances with becoming reverence and attention; but Jane, somehow, didn't seem to appreciate him as he wished to be appreciated, and he never felt quite sure that she was not laughing at him in her sleeve.

"So you are going to leave us by the eight o'clock train to-morrow, are you?" asked Jane, when he went to Pincote to say a few last words of farewell. He had sat down by her side on the sofa, and taken her unresisting hand in his; a somewhat thin, cold little hand, that returned his pressure very faintly. How different, as he could not help saying to himself, from the warm, plump fingers of Matilda Moggs.

"Yes, I'm going by the morning train. Perhaps I shall never come back. Perhaps I shall be drowned," he said, somewhat dolorously.

"Not you, Edward, dear. You will live to plague us all for many a

year to come. I wish I could do your business, and go instead of you."

"You don't mean to say that you would like to cross the Atlantic, Jane?"

"I mean to say that there are few things in the world would please me better. What a fresh and glorious experience it must be to one who has never been far from home!"

"But think of the sea sickness."

"Think of being out of sight of commonplace land for days and days together. Think how delightful it must be to be rocked on the great Atlantic rollers, and what a new and pleasant sensation it must be to know that there is only a plank between yourself and the fishes, and yet not to feel the least bit afraid."

Edward shuddered. "When you wake up in the middle of the night, and hear the wind blowing hard, you will think of me, won't you?" he said.

"Of course I shall. And I shall wish I were by your side to enjoy it. To be out in a gale on the Atlantic—that must indeed be glorious!"

Edward's fat cheeks became a shade paler. "Don't talk in that way, Jane," he said. "One never can tell what may happen. I shall write to you, of course, and all that; and you won't forget me while I'm away, will you?"

"No, I shall not forget you, Edward; of that you may be quite sure."

Then he drew her towards him, and kissed her; and then, after a few more words, he went away.

It was just the sort of parting that his father would have approved of, he said to himself, as he drove down the avenue. No tears, no sentimental nonsense, no fuss of any kind. Privately he felt somewhat aggrieved that she had not taken the parting more to heart. "There wasn't even a single tear in her eye," he said to himself. "She doesn't half know how to appreciate a fellow."

He would perhaps have altered his opinion in some measure could he have seen Jane half an hour later. She had locked herself in her bedroom, and was crying bitterly. Why she was crying thus she would have found it difficult to explain: in fact, she hardly knew herself. It is possible that her tears were not altogether tears of bitterness—that some other feeling than sorrow for her temporary separation from Edward Cope was stirring the fountains of her heart. She kept on upbraiding herself for her coldness and want of feeling, and trying to persuade herself that she was deeply sorry, rather than secretly—very secretly—glad to be relieved of the tedium of his presence for several weeks to come. She knew how wrong it was of her—it was almost wicked, she thought—to feel thus: but, underlying all her tears,

was a gleam of precious sunshine, of which she was dimly conscious, although she would not acknowledge its presence even to herself.

After a time her tears ceased to flow. She got up and bathed her eyes. While thus occupied her maid knocked at the door.

Mr. Bristow was down stairs. He had brought some photographs for Miss Culpepper to look at.

"Tell Mr. Bristow how sorry I am that I cannot see him to-day," said Jane. "But my head aches so badly that I cannot possibly go down." Then when the girl was gone, "I won't see him to-day," she added to herself. "When Edward and I are married he will come and see us sometimes, perhaps. Edward will always be glad to see him."

Hearing the front-door clash, she ran to the window and pulled aside a corner of the blind. In a minute or two she saw Tom walking leisurely down the avenue. Presently he paused, and turned, and began to scan the house as if he knew that Jane were watching him. It was quite impossible that he should see her, but for all that she shrank back with a blush and a shy little smile. But she did not loose her hold of the blind; and presently she peeped again, and never moved her eyes till Tom was lost to view.

Then she went down stairs into the drawing-room, and found there the photographs which Tom had left for her inspection. There, too, lying close by, was a glove which he had dropped and had omitted to pick up again. "I will give it to him next time he comes," she said softly to herself. Strange to relate, her next action was to press the glove to her lips, after which she hid it away in the bosom of her dress. But young ladies' memories are proverbially treacherous, and Jane's was no exception to the rule. Tom Bristow's glove never found its way back into his possession.

Jane Culpepper had drifted into her engagement with Edward Cope almost without knowing how such a state of affairs had been brought about. When her father first mentioned the matter to her, and told her that Edward was fond of her, she laughed at the idea of Edward being fond of anything but his horses and his gun. When, later on, the young banker, in obedience to parental instructions, blundered through a sort of declaration of love, she laughed again, but neither repulsed nor encouraged him. She was quite heart-whole and fancy-free; but certainly Mr. Cope, Junior, bore only the faintest resemblance to the vague hero of her girlish dreams—who would come riding one day out of the enchanted Kingdom of Love, and, falling on his knees before her, implore her to share his heart and fortune for evermore. To speak the truth, there was no romance of any kind about Edward. He was hopelessly prosaic: he was irredeemably commonplace; but they had known each other from childhood, and she had a kindly regard for him, arising from that very fact. So, pending the arrival of Prince Charm-

ing, she did not altogether repulse him, but went on treating his suit as a piece of pleasant absurdity which could never work itself out to a serious issue either for herself or him. She took the alarm a little when some whispers reached her that she would be asked, before long, to fix a day for the wedding; but, latterly, even those whispers had died away. Nobody seemed in a hurry to press the affair forward to its legitimate conclusion: even Edward himself showed no impatience on the point. So long as he could come and go at Pincote as he liked, and hover about Jane, and squeeze her hand occasionally, and drive her out once or twice a week behind his high-stepping bays, he seemed to want nothing more. They were just the same to each other as they had been when they were children, Jane said to herself—and why should they not remain so?

But, of late, a slight change had come o'er the spirit of Miss Culpepper's dream. New hopes, and thoughts, and fears, to which she had hitherto been a stranger, began to nestle and flutter round her heart, like love-birds building in spring. The thought of becoming the wife of Edward Cope was fast becoming—nay, had already become, utterly distasteful to her. She began to realize the fact that it is impossible to keep on playing with fire without getting burnt. She had allowed herself to drift into an engagement with a man for whom she really cared nothing, thinking, probably, at the time that for her no Prince Charming would ever come riding out of the woods; and that, if it would please her father, she might as well marry Edward Cope as anyone else. But behold! all at once Prince Charming *had* come, and although, as yet, he had not gone down on his knees and offered his hand and heart for evermore, she felt that she could never love but him alone. She felt, too, with a sort of dumb despair, that she had already given herself away beyond recall—or, at least, had led the world to think that she had so given herself away; and that she could not, with any show of maidenly honour, reclaim a gift which she had let slip from her so lightly and easily that she hardly knew herself when it was gone.

The eve of Lionel Dering's trial came at last. The Duxley assizes had opened on the previous Thursday. All the minor cases had been got through by Saturday night, and one of the two judges had already gone forward to the next town. The Park Newton murder case had been left purposely till Monday, and by those who were supposed to know best, it was considered not unlikely that trial, verdict, and sentence would all be got through in the course of one sitting.

The celebrated Mr. Tressil, who had been specially engaged for the defence, found it impossible to get down to Duxley before the five o'clock train on Sunday afternoon. He was met on the platform by Mr. Hoskyns and Mr. Bristow. His junior in the case, Mr. Little, was

to meet him by appointment at his rooms later on. Tom was introduced to Mr. Tressil by Hoskyns as a particular friend of Mr. Dering's, and the three gentlemen at once drove to the prison. Mr. Tressil had gone carefully through his brief as he came down in the train. The information conveyed therein was so ample and complete that it was more as a matter of form than to serve any real purpose that he went to see his client. The interview was a very brief one. The few questions Mr. Tressil had to ask were readily answered, but it was quite evident that there was no fresh point to be elicited. Then Mr. Tressil went away, accompanied by Mr. Hoskyns; and Tom was left alone with his friend.

Edith had taken leave of her husband an hour before. They would see each other no more till after the trial was over. What the result of the trial might possibly be they neither of them dared so much as whisper. Each of them put on a make-believe gaiety and cheerfulness of manner, hoping thereby to deceive the other—as if such a thing were possible.

"In two days' time you will be back again at Park Newton," Edith had said, "and will find yourself saddled with a wife whom, while a prisoner, you were compelled to marry against your will. Surely, in so extreme a case the Divorce Court would take pity on you, and grant you some relief."

"An excellent suggestion," said Lionel, with a laugh. "I must have some talk with Hoskyns about it. Meanwhile, suppose you get your trunks packed, and prepare for an early start on our wedding tour. Oh! to get outside these four walls again—to have 'the sky above my head, and the grass beneath my feet'—what happiness—what ecstasy—that will be! A week from this time, Edith, we shall be at Chamounix. Think of that, sweet one! In place of this grim cell—the Alps and Freedom! Ah me! what a world of meaning there is in those few words!"

The clock struck four. It was time to go. Only by a supreme effort could Edith keep back her tears—but she did keep them back.

"Good bye—my husband!" she whispered, as she kissed him on the lips—the eyes—the forehead. "May He who knows all our sorrows, and can lighten all our burdens, grant you strength for the morrow!"

Lionel's lips formed the words, "Good-bye," but no sound came from them. One last clasp of the hand—one last yearning, heartfelt look straight into each other's eyes, and then Edith was gone. Lionel fell back on his seat with a groan as the door shut behind her; and there, with bowed head and clasped fingers, he sat without moving till the coming of Mr. Tressil and the others warned him that he was no longer alone.

As soon as Mr. Tressil and Hoskyns were gone, Lionel lighted up

his biggest meerschau, and Tom was persuaded, for once, into trying a very mild cigarette. Neither of them spoke much—in fact neither of them seemed to have much to say. They were Englishmen, and to-day they did not belie the taciturnity of their race. They made a few disjointed remarks about the weather, and they both agreed that there was every prospect of an excellent harvest. Lionel inquired after the Culpeppers, and was sorry to hear that the Squire was confined to his room with gout. After that, there seemed to be nothing more to say, but they understood each other so well that there was no need of words to interpret between them. Simply to have Tom sitting there, was to Lionel a comfort and a consolation such as nothing else, except the presence of his wife, could have afforded him; and for Tom to have gone to his lodgings without spending that last hour with his friend, would have been a sheer impossibility.

"I shall see you to-morrow?" asked Lionel, as Tom rose to go.

"Certainly you will."

"Good night, old fellow."

"Good night, Dering. Take my advice, and don't sit up reading or anything to-night, but get off to bed as early as you can."

Lionel nodded and smiled, and so they parted.

Tom had called at Alder Cottage earlier in the day, and had seen Edith and Mrs. Garside, and had given them their final instructions. He had one other person still to see—Mr. Sprague, the chemist, and him he went in search of as soon as he had bidden Lionel good night.

Mr. Sprague himself came in answer to Tom's ring at the bell, and ushered his visitor into a stuffy little parlour behind the shop, where he had been lounging on the sofa in his shirt-sleeves, reading Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy." And a very melancholy, careworn-looking man was this chemist whom Tom had come to see. He looked as if the perpetual battle for daily bread, which had been going on with him from year's end to year's end ever since he was old enough to handle a pestle, was at last beginning to daunt him. He had a cowed, woe-begone expression as he passed his fingers wearily through his thin grizzled locks: although he did his best to put on an air of cheerfulness at the tardy prospect of a customer.

Tom and the chemist were old acquaintances. Sprague's shop was one of the institutions of Duxley, and had been known to Tom from his early boyhood. Once or twice during his present visit to the town he had called there and made a few purchases, and chatted over old times, and old friends long dead and gone, with the melancholy chemist.

"You still stick to the old place, Mr. Sprague," said Tom as he sat down on the ancient sofa.

"Yes, Mr. Bristow—yes. I don't know that I could do better.

My father kept the shop before me, and everybody in Duxley knows it."

"I suppose you will be retiring on your fortune before long?"

The chemist laughed a hollow laugh. "With thirteen youthful and voracious mouths to feed, it looks like making a fortune, don't it, sir?"

"A baker's dozen of youngsters! Fie, Mr. Sprague, fie!"

"Talking about the baker, sir, I give you my word of honour that he and the butcher take nearly every farthing of profit I get out of my business. It has come to this: that I can no longer make ends meet, as I used to do years ago. For the first time in my life, sir, I am behindhand with my rent, and goodness only knows when and how I shall get it made up!" Mr. Sprague's voice was very pitiable as he finished.

"But, surely, some of your children are old enough to help themselves," said Tom.

"The eldest are all girls," answered poor Mr. Sprague, "and they have to stay at home and help their mother with the little ones. My eldest boy, Alex, is only nine years old."

"Just the age to get him off your hands—just the age to get him into the Downham Foundation School."

"Oh, sir, what a relief that would be, both to his poor mother and me! The same thought has struck me, sir, many a time, but I have no influence—none whatever."

"But it is possible that I may have a little," said Tom kindly.

"Oh, Mr. Bristow!" gasped the chemist, and then could say no more.

"Supposing—merely supposing, you know," said Tom, "that I were to get your eldest boy into the Downham Foundation School, and were, in addition, to put a hundred-pound note into your hands with which to pay off your arrears of rent, you would be willing to do a trifling service for me in return?"

"I should be the most ungrateful wretch in the world were I to refuse to do so," replied the chemist earnestly.

"Then, listen," said Tom. "You are summoned to serve as one of the jury in the great murder case to-morrow."

Mr. Sprague nodded.

"You will serve, as a matter of course," continued Tom. "I shall be in the court, and in such a position that you can see me without difficulty. As soon as the clock strikes three, you will look at me, and you will keep on looking at me every two or three minutes, waiting for a signal from me. Perhaps it will not be requisite for me to give the signal at all—in that case, I shall not need your services; but whether they are needed or no, your remuneration will in every respect be the same."

"And what is the signal, Mr. Bristow, for which I am to look out?"

"The scratching, with my little finger—thus—of the left-hand side of my nose."

"And what am I to do when I see the signal?"

"You are to pretend that you are taken suddenly ill, and you are to keep up that pretence long enough to render it impossible for the trial to be finished on Monday—long enough, in fact, to make its postponement to Tuesday morning an inevitable necessity."

"I understand, sir. You want the trial to extend into the second day; instead of being finished, as it might be, on the first?"

"That is exactly what I want. Can you counterfeit a sudden attack of illness, so as to give it an air of reality?"

"I ought to be able to do so, sir. I see plenty of the symptoms every day of my life."

"They will send for a doctor to examine you, you know."

"I suppose so, sir. But my plan will be this: not merely to pretend to be ill, but to be ill in reality. To swallow something, in fact—say a pill concocted by myself—which will really make me very sick and ill for two or three hours, without doing me any permanent injury."

"Not a bad idea by any means. But you understand that you are to take no action whatever in the matter until you see my signal."

"I understand that clearly."

After a little more conversation, Tom went, carrying with him in his waistcoat pocket a tiny phial, filled with some dark-coloured fluid which the chemist had mixed expressly for him.

On the point of leaving, Tom produced three or four rustling pieces of paper. "Here are thirty pounds on account, Mr. Sprague," said he. "I think we understand one another, eh?"

The chemist's fingers closed like a vice on the notes. His heart gave a great sigh of relief. "I am your humble servant to command, Mr. Bristow," he returned. "You have saved my credit and my good name, and you may depend upon me in every way."

As Tom was walking soberly towards his lodging, he passed the open door of the Royal Hotel. Under the portico stood a man smoking a cigar. Their eyes met for an instant in the lamplight, but they were strangers to each other, and Tom passed on his way. Next moment he started, and turned to look again. He had heard a voice say: "Mr. St. George, your dinner is served."

He had come at last, then, this cousin, who had not been seen in Duxley since the day of the inquest—on whose evidence to-morrow so much would depend.

"Is that the man, I wonder," said Tom to himself, "in whose breast lies hidden the black secret of the murder? If not in his—then in whose?"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRIAL.

"How say you, prisoner at the bar : Guilty or Not Guilty ?"

"Not Guilty."

There was a moment's pause. A slight murmur passed like a ripple through the dense crowd. Each individual item, male and female, tried to wriggle itself into a more comfortable position, knowing that it was fixed in that particular spot for hours to come. The crier of the court called silence where silence was already, and next moment Mr. Purcell, the counsel for the prosecution, rose to his feet. He glanced up at the prisoner for one brief moment, bowed slightly to the judge, hitched his gown well forward, fixed one foot firmly on a spindle of the nearest chair, and turned over the first page of his brief.

Mr. Purcell possessed in an eminent degree the faculty of clear and lucid exposition. His manner was passionless, his style frigid. He aimed at nothing more than giving a cold, unvarnished statement of the facts. But then the way in which he marshalled these facts—going, step by step, through the evidence as taken before the magistrates, bringing out with fatal clearness point after point against the prisoner, gradually wrapping him round, as it were, in an inextricable network of evidence from which it seemed impossible for any human agency to free him—was, to such of his hearers as could appreciate his efforts, an intellectual treat of a very rare order indeed. Even Lionel had to ask himself, in a sort of maze, "Am I guilty, or am I not," when Mr. Purcell came to the end of his exposition, and took breath for a moment while the first witness for the prosecution was being sworn by the clerk of the court.

That first witness was Kester St. George.

Mr. St. George looked very pale—his recent illness might account or that—but he showed not the slightest trace of nervousness as he stepped into the witness-box. It was noticed by several people that he kept his eyes fixed straight before him, and never once turned them on the prisoner in the dock.

The evidence elicited from Mr. St. George was—epitomised—to the following effect:—Was own cousin to the prisoner at the bar, but had not seen him since they were boys together till prisoner called on him in London a few weeks before the murder. Met prisoner in the street shortly afterwards. Introduced him to Mr. Osmond, the murdered man, who happened to be in his (witness's) company at the time. Prisoner, on the spot, invited both witness and Osmond to visit him at Park Newton. The invitation was accepted. Witness and Osmond went down to Park Newton, and up to the night of the

murder everything passed off in the most amicable and friendly spirit. On that evening they all three dined by invitation with Mr. Culpepper, of Pincote. They got back to Park Newton about eleven o'clock. Osmond then proposed to finish up the evening with a game at billiards. Prisoner objected for a time, but ultimately yielded the point, and they all went into the billiard-room. The game was to be a hundred up, and everything went on satisfactorily till Osmond accused prisoner of having played with the wrong ball. This prisoner denied. An altercation followed. After some words on both sides, Osmond threw part of a glass of seltzer-and-brandy into prisoner's face. Prisoner sprang at Osmond and seized him by the throat. Osmond drew a small revolver and fired at prisoner, but fortunately missed him. Witness then interposed, dragged Osmond from the room, and put him into the hands of his (witness's) valet, with instructions not to leave him till he was safely in bed. Then went back to prisoner, whom he found still in the billiard-room, but depressed in spirits, and complaining of one of those violent headaches that were constitutional with him. Witness himself being subject to similar headaches, recommended to prisoner's notice a certain mixture from which he had himself derived much benefit. Prisoner agreed to take a dose of the mixture. Witness went to his own bedroom to obtain it, and then took it to the prisoner, whom he found partially undressed, preparing for bed. Prisoner took the mixture. Then he and witness bade each other good night, and separated. Next morning, at eight o'clock, witness's valet brought a telegram to his bedroom summoning him to London on important business. He dressed immediately, and left Park Newton at once—an hour and a half before the discovery of the murder.

Cross-examined by Mr. Tressil :

The only one of the three who was at all the worse for wine on their return from Pincote was Mr. Osmond. Had several times seen him in a similar condition. On such occasions he was very talkative, and rather inclined to be quarrelsome. Osmond was in error in saying that prisoner played with the wrong ball. Witness, in his position as marker, was watching the game very carefully, and was certain that no such mistake was made. Osmond was grossly insulting ; and prisoner, all through the quarrel, acted with the greatest forbearance. It was not till after Osmond had thrown the brandy-and-seltzer in his face that prisoner laid hands on him at all. The instant after, Osmond drew his revolver and fired. The bullet just missed prisoner's head and lodged in the wall behind him. After Osmond left the room no animosity or ill-feeling was evinced by prisoner towards him. On the contrary, prisoner expressed his deep regret that such a fracas should have taken place under his roof. Had not the slightest fear that there would be any renewal of the quarrel afterwards, or would not have left for London next morning. Certainly thought that an ample apology

was due from Osmond, and never doubted that such an apology would be forthcoming when he had slept off the effects of the wine. Was never more surprised or shocked in his life than when he heard of the murder, and that his cousin was accused of the crime. It seemed to him too horrible for belief. Could not conceive of any possible motive that the prisoner could have for committing such a crime.

"Would you not almost as soon expect to have been the author of such a crime yourself?" asked Mr. Tressil.

Mr. St. George turned a shade paler than he was before, and for the first time he seemed to hesitate a little before answering the question. "Yes," he said at last, "I should almost as soon expect such a thing. In fact, I cannot, even now, believe that my cousin, Lionel Dering, is the murderer of Percy Osmond."

Mr. Tressil sat down, and Mr. Little rose to his feet.

"On the night of the quarrel prisoner complained to you of having a very violent headache?"

"He did."

"And you proffered to administer to him a dose of a certain narcotic which you had found to be efficacious in such cases yourself?"

"I did."

"How many drops of the narcotic did you administer to the prisoner?"

"Fifteen, in water."

"You saw him drink it?"

"I did."

"You yourself are troubled with violent headaches at times?"

"I am."

"At such times you administer to yourself a dose of the same narcotic that you administered to the prisoner?"

"I do."

"And you derive great benefit from it?"

"Invariably."

"How many drops of the narcotic do you take yourself on such occasions?"

"Fifteen, in water."

"Is that your invariable dose?"

"It is."

"Speaking for yourself, what is the effect it has upon you on such occasions?"

"It induces languor and drowsiness, and seems to deaden the pain. Its chief object is to insure a good night's rest—nothing more."

"How many years have you been in the habit of taking this narcotic?"

"At intervals, for a dozen years."

"You have therefore become habituated to the use of it?"

"To a certain extent, yes."

"But if you, after twelve years' practice, are in the habit of taking only fifteen drops, does it not strike you that that quantity was somewhat of an overdose for a man who had never taken anything of the kind before?"

"It did not strike me as being so at the time. The prisoner is a strong and healthy man, and his headache was a very violent one."

"But, in any case, the general effect would be to induce a sense of extreme drowsiness, which, in a little while, would result in a dull, heavy sleep—a sleep so heavy and so dull that the sense of violent pain would be deadened, and even lost for the time being?"

"Those are precisely the effects which might be expected."

"How soon, after a dose has been taken, does the feeling of drowsiness come on?"

"In about a quarter of an hour."

"Suppose, now, that after you had taken a dose of the narcotic, you wished, for some particular reason, to keep broad awake; suppose that you had some important business to transact—say, if you like, that you had a murder to commit—how would that be?"

"I should find it utterly impossible to keep awake. The feeling of drowsiness induced is so intense that your whole and sole desire is to sleep: you feel as if you wanted to sleep for a month without waking."

Mr. Little sat down and Mr. St. George left the witness-box. As he was stepping down into the body of the court his eyes met the eyes of Lionel Dering for the first time that day. It was but for a moment, and then Kester's head was turned deliberately away. But in that moment Lionel saw, or fancied that he saw, the self-same expression flash from his cousin's eyes that he had seen in them that night, now many months ago, when they recognized each other across the crowd on Westminster Bridge—a look of cold, deadly, unquenchable hate, that nothing but death could cancel, with which, to-day, was mingled a look of scornful triumph that seemed to say, "My turn has come at last." For one brief instant Lionel seemed to see his cousin's soul stand unveiled and naked before him.

As before, it was a look that chilled his heart and troubled him strangely. Kester had given his evidence in a perfectly fair and straightforward manner, without betraying the slightest animus against his cousin: indeed, he had distinctly stated more than once that he could not and would not believe that Lionel was guilty of the terrible crime for which he was arraigned, and the little sympathetic thrill which he threw into his soft musical voice at such times could hardly pass unnoticed by anyone. But how reconcile such tokens of goodwill and cousinly affection with the fact that he had never once spoken

a word to Lionel since they parted in the latter's bedroom on the night of the murder? Even at the inquest, and during the few days that elapsed after the murder before Lionel was committed for trial, his cousin had never come near him, or made any effort whatever to see him. Afterwards there had been vague news of his serious illness in London; but, even then, he might surely have written, or have dictated half-a-dozen lines, had it been only to say that he was too ill to come in person. But during all those weary days of waiting in prison there had come no word, no message, no token to tell Lionel that there was any such person as Kester St. George in existence.

And now, to-day, what did that look mean? To a man of Lionel's frank and unsuspecting disposition it seemed difficult, nay next to impossible, to believe that he must count his cousin, not as a friend, but as an enemy; and yet the conviction was beginning to dawn slowly upon him that such was indeed the case. But with the dawning of that conviction there was growing up in his mind a dim, vague suspicion, shapeless as yet, but hideous in its shapelessness, to which neither name nor speech had yet been given, but which began to haunt him day and night like some weird nightmare which it was impossible to shake off.

The next witness that was called was Martin Rooke.

Was in prisoner's employ as under-footman at Park Newton. Had been appointed specially to wait on Mr. Osmond, that gentleman having brought no servant with him. One of his duties was to call Mr. Osmond about nine o'clock every morning. Remembered the morning of the ninth of May very well: in fact, should never forget it as long as he lived. Went as usual about nine o'clock—it might be a few minutes before or a few minutes after the hour—to call Mr. Osmond. Found the door unlocked, as usual, and went in after knocking once. The room was quite dark, and the first thing witness did was to open the shutters. Then went up to the bed with the intention of calling Mr. Osmond. Saw at once what had happened. Mr. Osmond was lying on his back across the bed. After the first shock of the surprise was over he rushed downstairs and summoned assistance. All the servants, who were about, at once went upstairs with him into the room. Mr. Pearce, the butler, sent off post-haste for the nearest doctor. Then the rest of the servants, except witness, and Janvard, Mr. St. George's valet, went in a body to rouse Mr. Dering, who was sleeping in the room next to that of Mr. Osmond. One of Mr. Osmond's hands was open, the other was shut as if it were clasping something. Janvard took hold of the shut hand, and tried to open the fingers, when something fell from them to the floor. Janvard picked up the fallen article, when witness saw that it was a shirt-stud made of jet, set in filagree gold. "This stud is Mr. Dering's property," said Janvard. "I saw it in his shirt last night." Then witness and Janvard looked about the

room and under the bed, to see whether they could find a weapon of any kind, but could not. Then they left Mr. Osmond's room together, and went along the corridor to Mr. Dering's room. The door was wide open, and Pearce and the other servants were clustered round it. Witness peeped over the shoulders of the others, and saw prisoner standing in the middle of the room, looking like a man half dazed. There were red stains on his shirt-front, and there was a red-stained pocket-handkerchief lying at his feet. Janvard then showed prisoner the stud, and asked him whether it was his property. Prisoner said that it was, and asked him where he had found it. Janvard answered that he had found it in the hand of the murdered man. Prisoner sat down in the nearest chair, and witness thought he was going to faint. Then Pearce ordered everybody away, and went into the room and shut the door. Witness went back to Mr. Osmond's room, locked the door, and kept the key till the doctor came—with whom came also the superintendent of police.

The cross-examination of this witness elicited nothing of any importance in favour of the prisoner.

The next witness was Pierre Janvard.

Witness deposed that on the night of the eighth of May he was sitting up for his master, Mr. St. George, who, after his return from Pincote, where he had been dining, had joined prisoner and Mr. Osmond in the billiard-room. About midnight the bell rang, and on answering it he found Mr. Osmond seated on the bottom stair of the flight that led to the bed-rooms, and his master standing near him. Mr. St. George motioned to witness to get Mr. Osmond upstairs, and whispered to him that he was not to leave him till he had seen him safely in bed. Mr. St. George then went back to the billiard-room, and witness, after a little persuasion, managed to get Mr. Osmond as far as his own room. Mr. Osmond was half drunk, and was evidently much excited. He kept shaking his head, and talking to himself under his breath, but witness could not make out what he said. Had seen Mr. Osmond the worse for wine several times before. It was the duty of Rooke, the previous witness, to attend to him at such times; but Rooke was in bed, and he (witness) did not care to disturb him. After a little while Mr. Osmond was induced to get into bed. Witness lingered in the room for a few minutes till he seemed fast asleep, then left him, and neither knew nor heard anything more about him till Rooke rushed into the servants' hall, about nine o'clock next morning, with the news of the murder.

The rest of the evidence given by Janvard was little more than a recapitulation of that already given by Rooke. The evidence of the latter was confirmed with regard to the finding of the jet stud, and its recognition by the prisoner as his property. The stud itself was produced in court, and handed up to the jury for inspection.

The next witness was James Mackerith, M.D.

Dr. Mackerith began by stating that between nine and ten o'clock on

the morning of May ninth, a servant from Park Newton rode up to his house, and told him he was wanted, without a moment's delay, to look to a gentleman who had been murdered during the night. Witness got out his gig and started at once, and, meeting the superintendent of police on the way, that gentleman joined him on hearing his errand. Witness then went on to describe the finding and appearance of the body. Mr. Osmond had been stabbed through the heart with a knife or dagger. Death, which must have been almost instantaneous, had taken place at least five or six hours before the arrival of witness. There were no traces of any struggle. In all probability Mr. Osmond had been murdered in his sleep, or at the moment when he first opened his eyes, and before he had time to raise any alarm.

This witness was severely cross-examined by Mr. Tressil as to the possibility or otherwise of deceased having committed suicide, but nothing could shake him in his positive conviction that, in the present case, such a theory was utterly untenable. After the cross-examination of Dr. Mackerith was brought to an end the court adjourned for luncheon.

It was now two o'clock, and although there were three or four minor witnesses still to be examined, the general impression seemed to be that, if the jury were not long in making up their minds, the whole unhappy business would be brought to an end by six o'clock at the latest.

The prisoner, who, by the judge's instructions, had quite early in the day been accommodated with a chair, had listened with quiet attention to the progress of the case, but had not otherwise seemed to take more interest in it than any ordinary spectator might have done. He had a thorough comprehension from the first that the trial must go dead against him, but he never abated by one jot the quiet, resolute calmness of his manner. He was the same to-day as he had been on the first day of his imprisonment; only, to-day, he was the focus of a thousand inquisitive eyes; but he seemed as utterly unconscious of the fact as though he were sitting in the silence and solitude of his cell.

Hour by hour, as the trial went on, Tom sent brief notes by a messenger to Edith. In these notes all that he could say was that such and such a witness was under examination, and that everything was going on as favourably as could be expected. He knew how miserably ineffective such messages would be to allay the dreadful anxiety of her to whom they were addressed; but, as he asked himself, what more could he write? He took advantage of the few minutes allowed for luncheon to run up in person to Alder Cottage. Edith, that day, looked to him a dozen years older than he had ever seen her look before. Very pale and worn, but very calm also. But there was something in her eyes—the wild, yearning, terrified look of some poor hunted creature, as it were, who sees that for it there is no possible door of escape—which revealed to Tom something of the terrible struggle

going on within. It was but scant comfort that he could give her, but even for that she was grateful.

Tom found that he had still five minutes to spare when he got back to the court, so he hunted up Jabez Creede, whom he found haunting the purlieu of a neighbouring tavern, but apparently lacking either the money or the courage to venture inside. Tom supplied him with both, and, after two steaming glasses of rum and water, Jabez, with a sort of moist gratitude in his voice, declared that he felt better—"very much better indeed, thank you, Mr. Bristow, sir."

Tom, before going up to Alder Cottage, had contrived to have a brief note passed to Mr. Sprague. "I hope you are prepared, as I expect that I shall require your services."

On the reassembling of the court, Pearce, the butler at Park Newton, was the first witness called. He deposed to no material facts with which the reader is not already acquainted.

Next came Mr. Drayton, the Duxley superintendent of police, who told the story of his arrest of the prisoner, and how he had searched the house and grounds at Park Newton, but could find no trace of the weapon by which the deed had been done.

Next came a Mr. Whitstone, uncle to the murdered man, to whom, as the nearest relative in England, had been handed over the effects of the deceased. Mr. Whitstone deposed that, after a careful examination of the said effects, he had come to the conclusion that nothing had been stolen. So far as he could judge, no article of value was missing; and consequently, whatever other motive might have been at the bottom of the crime, it could not have been done for the sake of robbery.

With the examination of one or two minor witnesses the case for the prosecution came to an end.

There were no witnesses to call for the defence, and Mr. Tressil at once arose to address the court.

Tom Bristow was sitting close behind three or four junior counsel, and in full view of the jury. Whispered one of these fledglings to another, so that Tom could not help overhearing him: "That jet stud will hang him."

Answered the other: "Bet you a new hat old Tressil won't be on his legs more than thirty minutes."

"If the jury agree—and I don't see how they can disagree—the whole thing will be over by five thirty."

"Hope so, I'm sure. Meet you at eight for a game of pool?"

"I'm your man."

It was now twenty minutes to four o'clock.

Mr. Tressil began his speech for the defence. He had only got through the three or four opening sentences when one of the jury fell forward in the box, and, on being lifted up by two of his colleagues,

it was found that he had been suddenly seized with illness. The jurymen in question was Mr. Sprague, the chemist. He was carried at once into the open air. A buzz of curiosity and excitement ran round the court. Mr. Tressil sat down. The judge yawned politely behind his hand, and the junior barristers passed a snuff-box surreptitiously from one to another. In the course of three or four minutes Dr. Mackerith, who had followed Mr. Sprague into the side room, came back into court. Addressing the judge, said he: "My lord, I regret to inform you that Mr. Sprague, the jurymen, is very ill indeed, and that there seems little or no probability that he will be able to resume his duties for at least three or four hours to come."

His lordship looked very much discomposed, and blew his nose violently. "I never, in the whole course of my experience, recollect such a circumstance before," he remarked. "It is very annoying, and very unfortunate. It leaves me without any option in the matter. The court must stand adjourned till ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER XVII.

A BOTTLE OF BURGUNDY.

"**THERE** goes ten of 'em. Old Hoskyns can never want me at this time of night. At all events, if he don't come soon he won't find me here. If a man can't call his time his own after ten o'clock at night, he's no better than a slave."

The speaker was Jabez Creede, and he was sitting, with a short black pipe in his mouth, over a handful of fire—although the evening was a summer one—in the meanly furnished room which he called his home. In one hand he held a crumpled scrap of paper, the writing on which he now proceeded to read over again for the twentieth time. "Please not to be out of the way this evening, as I may possibly want you on important business.—J. HOSKYNs."

"Ugh!" growled Creede in disgust, as he flung the paper into the fire. "One might work one's heartstrings out for old Hoskyns, and there would never be an extra half quid for a poor devil on pay-day. I wish Mr. Bristow would take to the business. He's one of the right sort, he is. I wish——"

Here he was interrupted by a knock at the door. Presently his landlady entered. "Mr. Hoskyns is waiting below," said the woman. "He wants you to put on your hat and coat, and go with him."

Creede growled, put down his pipe, rose, yawned, stretched himself inducted himself into a shabby grease-stained brown overcoat, pulled his battered hat over his gloomy brows, and stumbled downstairs. He had been drinking heavily during the day—indeed, the days when

he did not drink heavily were few and far between—and both his gait and his tongue were in some measure affected by his potations.

Mr. Hoskyns was standing at the door, carrying in one hand the old blue-bag with which Creede had been familiar for years.

"Make haste, man alive," said the lawyer, impatiently: "I want you to go with me to the prison. Some most important evidence in our favour has just turned up, and I must see Mr. Dering at once. Here, catch hold of this."

"It's precious heavy," grumbled Creede as he took the bag.

"I daresay it is," answered Hoskyns, drily. "A good many clever brains have been at work on the contents of that bag. It's weighty with wisdom and common sense—two commodities, Jabez Creede, with which you have never been overburdened."

Not a word more passed between them till they reached the prison. The distance they had to walk was not great, and Mr. Hoskyns seemed anxious to get over the ground as quickly as possible, turning his face neither to right hand nor left, but going straight on till they halted at the gates. The great prison looked as black, silent, and deserted as some City of the Dead. Hoskyns gave a tug at the bell-pull, and was just refreshing himself with a pinch of his favourite mixture, when a little wicket in the door was opened, and through the bars two keen eyes peered out into the semi-darkness.

"Ha, Warde, is that you?" he said, nodding cheerfully to the pair of eyes. "Rather late to look in upon you, eh? But it's a matter of life and death—nothing less—that has brought us. Some most important evidence in our favour has turned up at the last moment, and it is imperative that I should see my client without a moment's delay."

"It's long past the hour for visitors, Mr. Hoskyns, as you know; and it would be as much as my place is worth to——"

"Where's the governor? where's my friend, Mr. Dux?" interrupted Hoskyns impatiently. "Fetch him. He'll put the matter right in a moment."

"Mr. Dux, sir, is somewhere in the town, and has not yet got home. But I'll fetch Mr. Jackson, sir; perhaps he may be able to do something for you."

Jackson, the chief night-warder, was quickly on the spot, and the case explained to him in a few words.

"It's against the regulations, of course, Mr. Hoskyns," said Jackson; "but, considering the emergency of the case, and in the absence of Mr. Dux, I will take upon myself the responsibility of allowing you to see Mr. Dering."

"Thank you very much, Jackson—very much indeed," said the lawyer, with a flourish of his huge yellow silk pocket-handkerchief. "I give you my word of honour that it's nothing less than a case of life and death."

The little low-browed side-door had been opened by this time, and Mr. Hoskyns went in, followed by Jabez Creede carrying the bag of papers. Creede had accompanied his employer to the gaol several times before, and his face was well known to the warders.

"I can only ask that, under the circumstances, you will make your visit as short a one as possible; and I hope, with all my heart, that you will be able to extricate Mr. Dering from his difficulty."

"Jackson, you may take my word for it," said Hoskyns seriously, "that, before to-morrow night at this time, Mr. Dering will be a free man."

"I am heartily glad to hear it, sir, and I wish you a very good night."

"Great heaven! Hoskyns, what has brought you here at this uncanny hour?" exclaimed Lionel, starting up from his pallet, on which he had thrown himself without undressing, as the lawyer and Creede were ushered into his cell and the door locked behind them.

"I have got great tidings for you, Mr. Dering. Splendid tidings!" said Hoskyns as he took the bag from Creede. "But sit down, sir, and don't excite yourself, because I shall require your very best care and attention during the next few minutes." Speaking thus, he took off his broad-brimmed hat and deposited it tenderly on Lionel's bed; then he drew a chair up to the little deal table, motioned Lionel to take the opposite chair, and Creede to take the third and only remaining one. The latter gentleman, either from innate modesty, or because he was afraid that his breath might smell too strongly of rum, took care to plant himself a yard or two away from the table.

"Yes, sir, some splendid news—something that will astonish the world to-morrow," continued the lawyer, as he dived into his bag, and fished therefrom a carefully folded sheet of foolscap. "Read that, Mr. Dering—read that carefully through," he said, as he handed the paper in question to Lionel. "But, above all things, control your feelings."

Lionel took the paper, opened it, and read. Mr. Hoskyns, leaning forward with his elbows on the table, took a pinch of snuff slowly and artistically, staring across, meanwhile, very hard at Lionel.

The paper ran as under:—

"Be careful not to betray me by word or look. I am here to effect your escape. Follow my lead in everything, and show no surprise at anything that I may say or do.

"T. B."

Despite all his efforts to the contrary, Lionel could not keep his face from changing colour during the reading of these words.

"Very extraordinary, is it not," said the lawyer, as he took back the paper, "that this evidence should not have been forthcoming till the very last moment?"

"Very extraordinary, indeed," said Lionel, gravely.

He could hardly believe the evidence of his own senses. The voice, the features, the hair, the whiskers, the dress, the snuff-box, and the pocket-handkerchief, were all part and parcel of the genuine Hoskyns ; but when he looked intently through the gold-rimmed spectacles, he saw there the eyes—not to be mistaken for the eyes of any other man—of his faithful friend, Tom Bristow.

"I have shown the paper to Tressil," said Tom, still keeping up his assumed character, for it is hardly necessary to observe that Creede was not in the secret, "and he is quite agreed with me as to its vital importance. In fact it is at his request that I have come here to-night. There will be two or three telegrams to send off, and at least a couple of witnesses to hunt up, and all before the court opens in the morning. But before going into these details, I mean to drink your health—yes, sir, to drink your very good health, and to the happy acquittal which is sure to be yours in a few hours from the present time."

"I am much obliged to you, my dear Hoskyns," said Lionel, "but I'm afraid that my means of hospitality at present are limited to a copious supply of cold water."

"I've provided for that contingency, my dear sir, by bringing with me a bottle of prime old Burgundy from my own cellar," and he produced from his bag a tempting-looking black bottle with the cork already half drawn. "And now for a wineglass."

"I've nothing better to offer you than a tea-cup."

"Under the circumstances we will make shift with the tea-cup."

It was handed to him by Lionel. "The tea-cup turns out to be a coffee-cup," said Tom. With that, he went down on one knee, drew the cork half filled the cup with wine, and then offered it to Lionel.

"Not till you and Creede have both drunk to my health and acquittal," said the latter.

Tom took back the cup, gave utterance to an appropriate sentence or two, and tossed off the wine. Then going down again on one knee, he proceeded to refill the cup. The table was between him and Creede, and the latter, who had not failed to prick up his ears at the mention of something to drink, could not see clearly how Tom was engaged. He could hear the wine gurgle from the bottle into the cup, and that was enough for him. He did not see Tom's nimble fingers extract a tiny phial from his waistcoat pocket and pour the contents into the wine.

"Creede grumbled because my bag was so heavy," said Tom with a chuckle. "He wouldn't have said a word had he known what was inside it. Here, man, drink this off to Mr. Dering's very good health, and tell me whether you ever tasted anything better in your life."

He handed the cup to Creede, who rose somewhat unsteadily from

his chair to take it. "I drink to your very good health, Mr. Dering," he said, in a loutish sort of way, "and may you have a good deliverance." And carrying the cup to his mouth with a shaking hand, he drank off the contents at a draught.

Both Tom and Lionel were watching him keenly. He crossed the cell and put the cup down on the window-ledge, making a wry face as he did so. Then he sat down again on his chair.

"I am afraid, Creede, that you have vitiated your palate by accustoming it to inferior drinks," said Tom, "and that you don't know a good wine when you taste it."

"I'd sooner have one quartern of real old Jamaica than a gallon of that rubbish," growled Creede, with ill-disguised contempt.

"Now for business," said Tom. "There's not a minute to lose." And with that he fished a formidable-looking heap of documents from the depths of his bag. "Of course, the first thing to do," he went on, "is to get hold of our two new witnesses, Robinson and Davis. I think I can lay hands on them without much difficulty." And with that he went off into a long rigmarole respecting the supposed steps which it would be needful to take in the new state of affairs, but keeping a careful watch on Creede, meanwhile, out of the corners of his eyes.

Presently Creede's eyes began to glaze a little. Then they closed. Then they opened and closed again. Then his head sank forward on his breast, and his arms fell limply by his sides. Both the men were watching him intently. Suddenly Tom sprang from his seat, and was just in time to catch the inanimate body in his arms as it was sliding from the chair to the floor.

Tom held up a warning finger to Lionel, who had also started from his chair. For full two minutes he rested on one knee without moving, Creede supported in his arms. "He is fast now, I think," he said at last. "Help me to lift him on to the bed."

When the unconscious law-clerk had been laid on Lionel's bed, said Tom: "Now help me off with his coat, waistcoat, necktie, collar, and boots." It was a work of some little difficulty to accomplish all this, but it was done at last. Then, by Tom's instructions, Creede was stretched on the bed with his face to the wall, in the natural position of a sleeping man, and the bedclothes pulled over him.

Up to the present time Lionel had not asked a single question, but he could contain himself no longer. "In heaven's name, Bristow, what do all these strange proceedings mean?"

"They mean, Lionel Dering," said Tom, turning on him gravely, almost sternly, "that I am here to-night for the purpose of effecting your escape."

"Of effecting my escape!"

"What other purpose do you think would have brought me here in this disguise?"

"But—but——" stammered Lionel, and then he broke down utterly.

"Every minute is precious," said Tom. "There is no time to argue the case. Put yourself into my hands, and it will go hard but you will be a free man in an hour's time. Refuse my aid, and in less than three weeks from now you will be lying, a strangled corpse, in a murderer's grave."

Lionel shuddered and stared at Tom, but spoke not a single word.

"The trial is going against you, and to-morrow morning will see you condemned to death. Are you prepared to die by the hangman's hand for a crime of which you know nothing? Are you prepared to leave your young wife to the tender mercies of a world which will not fail to remember that her husband was a murderer? Live, man, live, if it be only for vengeance—if it be only to track out and hunt down the real murderer—if it be only to wipe the foul stain of blood from the name you bear—from the name which was borne by your father before you!"

"But why to-night?—why try to escape to-night?" pleaded Lionel. "The verdict has not yet been given. Who says that there is no chance of my acquittal?"

"I say it. Hoskyns says it. Tressil thinks it. You will be condemned to death to-morrow morning. After that, all chance of escape will be gone for ever. From that moment you will never be left alone till that most awful moment of all when you stand on the drop, pinioned, sightless, waiting for the bolt to fall. Dering, it must be to-night or never!"

"Bristow, I am in your hands, do with me as you will!" cried Lionel with emotion, and suiting the action to the word, he rose from the edge of the bed, and placed both his hands in those of his friend.

"That's all I ask, old boy," said Tom warmly. "Now sit down here, and obey my instructions, and don't bother me with any questions."

Lionel did as he was told, and sat down close under the gas light.

"There's no help for it," said Tom. "Both beard and moustache must be sacrificed."

"So be it," said Lionel, philosophically. "They will grow again if need be."

Next moment a pair of glittering scissors were playing round Lionel's mouth and chin, and in two minutes the entire mass of yellow beard and moustache was swept clean away. This, of itself, was almost enough to disguise Lionel beyond ordinary recognition. The chin and upper lip were left stubbly on purpose. Creede's face was nearly always stubbly—he rarely shaved more than once a week—and Lionel was now going to personate Creede. But Creede was very dark complexioned, while Lionel was just the opposite; so Tom's next operation was to produce from his wonderful bag a small bottle of some kind

of liquid, with which he proceeded to stain the hands, face, and neck of his friend. Next came a wig, which he had had specially made in London, and which was a very clever copy of the head of hair it was intended to simulate. It proved to be an excellent fit. With the fixing, by means of gum, of a scrap of ragged black hair under Lionel's chin—which was Creede's notion of a beard—the first part of Lionel's disguise was completed.

"Take off your coat, waistcoat, and cravat, and induct yourself into Mr. Creede's duplicates of those articles. You shudder at the thought. I do not wonder at it; but, for the time being, you must put all your finer feelings into your pocket. But first," added Tom, diving again into his bag, "pull on this pair of old black trousers over your own, after which you can go on with the remainder of your dressing while I finish with Silenus here."

Once more the bag came into requisition, and from it Tom brought orth a light-coloured wig, with which was combined a beard and moustache precisely the same in colour and appearance as those of which Lionel had been so recently despoiled. With these he proceeded to decorate the head and face of the unconscious Creede. It was necessary to do this, because the bed was exactly opposite the cell door, and once or twice in the course of the night, the warder on duty was instructed to open the little wicket, and see that everything was right with his prisoner. As Lionel lay in bed he was in full view of the warder, and it thus became requisite to "make up" Creede into some resemblance of the real prisoner, it not being at all unlikely that the warder might come round and take his usual look within a few minutes of the departure of Tom and Lionel.

When the wig, beard, and moustache had been duly arranged, and the bedclothes pulled close up round Creede's neck, Tom stepped back as far as the door in order to study the general effect. It was highly satisfactory. When the gas was turned down to the minimum point at which it was allowed to burn during the night, no one, without close examination, could have told that the man lying on the bed was other than Lionel Dering.

Satisfied so far, Tom next turned to Lionel, who by this time had duly inducted himself into Creede's garments. Here, also, the general effect was satisfactory. One reason why Tom's choice had fallen on Creede was because he and Lionel were both about the same height and build.

Tom gave a few final artistic touches to the tout ensemble—arranging the frayed old black necktie, and the limp, dirty collar, after Creede's own slovenly fashion—and finishing by putting into Lionel's reluctant hands the law-clerk's greasy and much worn hat.

"Years ago," said Tom, "when I amused myself with private theatricals, I little thought that my talent for 'making up' would ever be

brought into such valuable requisition. You would almost deceive Hoskyns himself if you were to walk into his office, especially by gaslight."

"And you would quite deceive him," said Lionel. "He would take you for his 'double,' and think his time was nearly come."

"There is one thing still to do," said Tom. "Creede's walk is rather a peculiar one. Now watch me, and try whether you can imitate it."

In about three minutes Lionel was tolerably perfect. "You know what kind of a voice Creede has," said Tom. "Should you be accosted by any of the warders as we go out, you must do your best to imitate it. And now I think we are ready for a start."

He crossed over to the bed to take another look at the unconscious Creede. He felt his pulse carefully, and then lifted up one of his eyelids and examined the pupil underneath.

"Let us hope that you have not given him an overdose of the narcotic," said Lionel.

"No fear of that," answered Tom. "Remember that my father was a doctor, and that I have some knowledge of drugs. I have made this man my study for weeks. It my calculations are correct, he will sleep for about three hours, not longer—and won't there be a hullabaloo when he awakes!"

"But assuming that we get safely out of the prison—what then? Where am I to go? How am I to get rid of this cursed disguise?" said Lionel.

"You are to go home to the wife of your bosom. Everything has been thought of—everything provided for your safety. And now for the attempt. Don't forget that you are Jabez Creede. Take the bag and follow me at a respectful distance. Pull your hat over your brows, and turn up the collar of your overcoat, and, above all things, don't seem to be in a hurry." Tom gave a final glance round the cell to see that everything was in order, turned the gas partially down, and then tapped at the door. A warder came in answer to the summons, and unlocked the door. Tom and Lionel stepped out into the corridor. The warder gave a glance into the cell, and saw, as he thought, his prisoner lying on his pallet with his face turned to the wall, as he had seen him lying many a time before.

"Tired out, poor fellow," whispered Tom in the warder's ear as the latter proceeded to relock the door. "But I've brought him good news, and I warrant he'll sleep as sound as a top to-night."

"Anyhow he'll know his fate by this time to-morrow," said the warder.

They followed the man along the corridor and through two or three passages, till they reached the outer courtyard. Here they were joined by two other warders. Tom, all this time, had been talking volubly, and making ample use of his big pocket-handkerchief—doing his best, in fact,

to keep his companion from being over-much noticed. But now had come the most dangerous moment of all. They were all crowded together close to the outer gate, waiting for it to be unfastened—the three warders, Tom, and Lionel—under the light of a flaring gas-lamp. The slightest hesitation—the least want of presence of mind—might have been fatal to everything.

Happily, Tom was equal to the occasion. While waiting for the bolts to be withdrawn, his thumb and finger slid into his waistcoat pocket, and the quick ears of the warders caught the pleasant chink of gold.

"Mr. Dering," said Tom, "would insist on my presenting you gentlemen with ten sovereigns to divide amongst you, as a slight token of his appreciation of your unvarying kindness. Here's the money; and I hope you won't forget to drink Mr. Dering's health before you are many hours older."

He pressed the gold into the hands of the nearest warder. The men's thoughts at once became occupied with the consideration of a fair and equal division of the gift. A moment later the door stood wide open. Tom, followed by Lionel, passed slowly out. "We hope you will convey our thanks to Mr. Dering," said the head warder, "and we are greatly obliged to you, sir. We are not allowed to receive presents of any kind, but in this case——"

"Which is an exceptional one," said Tom, "you won't refuse."

"If we were sure," said the warder in a low voice, "that it would never come to the governor's ears——"

"You may take my word that it never will. You can trust me, of course; and, in business matters, Creede here is as silent as the grave."

"In that case——"

"You will act like men of sense and keep the money. Good night."

"Good night, sir, and many thanks to you. Good night both."

Thank Heaven! at last the terrible door was shut behind them.

Ten minutes later a black shadow crept silently up to the door of Alder Cottage. Front and back the little house was all in darkness; but the door was ajar, and close behind it knelt—she had stood there till she could stand no longer—Edith, listening—listening with beating heart and straining nerves—with every sense on the alert. The black shadow touched the door. The door yielded to the touch. Another black shadow started up from the ground. Husband and wife met heart to heart. Lionel Dering was saved.

(To be continued.)

ALESSANDRO STRADELLA.

From the German of ELISE POLKO.

IN Naples, the gayest, most magnificent city of Italy, on the Riviera di Chiagi, where palace crowds upon palace, lay, almost at the end of the street, the princely dwelling of the Marchese Luigi. From its flat roof one could look far over the city and its churches, over laughing gardens and broad, cool courts, out on the blue waters of the gulf. Behind the palace stretched the shady garden, full of stony grottoes and fragrant groves, filled with marble statues, noble copies of the antique.

Adjoining the low back wall of the garden was a little yard belonging to a one-story house which was situated in a narrow, gloomy street. It was seldom that any one strayed to this part of the premises; it bore, therefore, visible traces of neglect, and the wall was much crumbled and damaged in several places. In the centre of the yard stood a pomegranate tree, which year after year was laden down with the most luxuriant blossoms, whilst, singularly enough, the pomegranate tree of the Marchese only now and then bore a few scanty buds.

In the little cottage back of the garden dwelt the widow Giovanna Stradella, with her son of twelve years. In the palace, the sickly Marchese, with his little daughter Beatrice of ten years of age. Since the death of his wife, he had loved nothing in the whole world but this child, and had cherished and watched over her as his most precious treasure. To deny the little one a single request was an impossibility to him, and he was glad she did not wish the sun and moon from the sky for playthings, because then he surely would have been driven to despair over the difficulty of procuring the said objects. Now one day in playing hide and seek, the little one chanced upon the crumbled wall where the blooming pomegranate tree looked over in its full glory; then with loud cries of joy at the unaccustomed sight, she ran to her ather and begged for the tree. The Marchese could do nothing more speedily than despatch a servant to the house of the widow, to ask her at what price she would sell it. The answer was short, but took both father and daughter by surprise. Giovanna Stradella sent word that the tree was for sale at no price, because it had been very dear to her deceased husband. The little Beatrice was highly incensed, and could not cease to wonder at this reply, for her nurse had always told her that the rich could have everything that was beautiful in the world, because they had money to purchase it. Nevertheless she daily strayed to the wall as long as the blossoms continued to shine forth from the delicate

foliage. One day she made her nurse lift her upon the low wall, and sat there sad and sorrowful, the heavy eyes bent upon the magic tree, feeling very curious all the time to catch a glimpse of that woman who called something her property which wealth could not buy. Suddenly she heard the silvery tones of a boy's voice, singing a familiar song, one which her mother had often sung beside her cradle. It was a mournful lay about a star who had loved the sun so dearly, that, in spite of the warning of his brothers, he had waited for her* to arise, and then had to die at the first smile of the much longed-for beloved one. Little Beatrice held her breath as she listened, the rosy lips parted, the hands clasped tightly, and the tears fell from her eyes.

"That is the song my mother used to sing, dost hear, Ritta?" she whispered. And Ritta nodded and looked about for the singer; but the little maiden discovered him first; he sat beneath the pomegranate tree, and was a tall, slender boy. He now came forward, and gazed with surprise at the little stranger and her companion. Beatrice, however, called out imperiously to him—"Now sing a merry song; you have made me sad!"

Then the chesnut-haired boy came closer, threw at her a sullen look, and replied—"You are no queen, whose right it is to command singers! If my songs do not please you, you must not listen to them."

"I will not listen to them then," rejoined Beatrice, just as defiantly, as she sprang down from the wall into her own garden. But alas! with a cry of pain she fell over; the poor little girl had sprained her right foot. In a trice some one from the next yard sprang upon the wall and down again at her side, gently supporting her; she recognized the young singer.

"It is my fault you have fallen," he said, much moved, "for I angered you. Only forgive me, and I will sing for you the merriest song I know!"

The little Beatrice did not say I forgive you, but she looked at him from the corners of her eyes, and smiled ever so little in spite of her pain; then she leaned upon his arm to make the attempt to walk home. At the first step Beatrice screamed out, and the boy threw his arms round her, lifted her carefully from the ground, and carried her cautiously towards the palace. When she saw him about to pass on to the servants' entrance hall, the little maiden cried, "Oh, please carry me into my father's room, he must see you. Hush, Ritta, it's all my ault, and I'll tell him so."

At the first sight of his darling, the Marchese was much alarmed, and cast wrathful glances at the trembling maid; after he had heard a somewhat modified account from the little one, he held out his hand to the boy in token of gratitude.

"He may come again and sing to me until I get well, mayn't he?"

* In German *die Sonne* (the sun) is feminine.

begged Beatrice. The Marchese looked at the boy ; he was so beautiful that he might have been a nobleman's son.

"What is your name ?" he asked gently.

"Alessandro Stradella," was the fearless reply.

"Come as often as you can, and cheer up my child," said the Marchese, and then Alessandro went away.

Every day as long as the little one was condemned to sit in her chair, the beautiful boy came and prattled with her ; told her about his mother ; about his dead father who played the violin so beautifully that the people in the streets would crowd around the window to hear him, and how his father had taught him to play the violin. He spoke about the pomegranate tree, too ; told how dearly his father had loved it, and how they had laid one of its blossoms upon his bosom when he died. Beatrice listened attentively, then showed him her precious playthings ; the picture of her dead mother, and of the little brother who had gone to heaven ; her bird in the gilt cage, and a thousand other pretty things, that Alessandro had never dreamed of before. But he only wondered at these things, he did not covet them. "My violin is a hundred times more beautiful than anything you have," he often said. He brought it with him one day, and she looked wonderingly at the oddly formed brown case.

"How ugly the thing is !" she said, depreciatingly. However, when he placed the instrument under his chin, drew the bow and played a melody, she grew quite pale, and when he finished she sighed deeply. "Don't bring that thing again," she murmured. "I cannot bear it." On the other hand she grew radiant with happiness when he sang a song and accompanied himself upon the mandoline. A sweeter voice than Alessandro's was nowhere to be found. The boy always laughed when he saw her emotion. He told her, too, that he was to be a singer, and go out into the wide world ; that already he had commenced attending the music school of Santa Maria di Loretto, and would not be able to come and see her any more after the next week.

"Why will you not come any more ?" asked Beatrice.

"Because I shall have lessons, and must study."

"But it is much nicer to talk and play than to study."

"Not for me."

"I want to learn to sing, too," she cried, passionately.

"Have you a good voice ?"

She looked at him haughtily, and said, "What you have I will have too. I choose to sing, and the voice will come."

Then Alessandro drew himself up proudly, and replied, "Do you think that the saints give all to you rich people—to us, the poor, nothing ? You dwell in fine houses, wear handsome clothing, and eat costly food from golden vessels ; therefore they give us something else ; and I tell you I would not change places, or give up this plain white

frock of the boys of Santa Maria di Loreto, and this black girdle, if you were to give me the richest gold-embroidered garments. You are richly endowed—so am I—but each in his own way; the saints are just!”

Then the face of the maiden grew crimson, and she said, authoritatively, “Sing! I will try upon the spot if you have received more than I.”

So he sang her a little melody, consisting of five notes, his eyes smiling roguishly the while, and she attempted to sing it after him. But whatever pains she took, however impatiently she stamped the scarcely recovered foot, no pure tones issued from her lips. She tried again and again, until at last quite exhausted, she ceased, exclaiming, “We will wait until I am a few years older.”

The injured foot grew well again, and Alessandro must go back to the music school, and was only able to visit his little friend on Sundays and holidays, or in the evening hours. She always received him with the liveliest signs of joy. The Marchese too was pleased to see the boy come, for his child was wonderfully improved since her acquaintance with the young student of Santa Maria di Loreto. She was more cheerful, her great large eyes had lost that longing, melancholy expression which had always cut the father to the heart, as a mute questioning after the lost mother; and she looked out inquiringly into the world. Her cheeks gained colour, and her slow step changed to one of youth and joyousness.

Ritta, too, loved the young Alessandro. “He is so beautiful,” she would say; “he is worthy to live in a palace.”

One evening Alessandro failed to come at the appointed hour. Beatrice, who awaited him impatiently, finally escaped the careless Ritta, who was gossiping with the servants, and stole into the garden, and as she saw the window of the little cottage faintly illumined, she quickly climbed over the wall, ran across the yard and straight up the steps into a humble apartment, where a tall, grave woman sat at a table stringing cockles.

“Where is he?” she cried, breathlessly.

“At the music school; they have a rehearsal of a Litany to-day, in the Church of St. Francisus. You are surely Beatrice?”

“You know it, and yet you have never seen me; how is that?”

“Alessandro has, though, and has given me so true a description that I could not but know you. Come here, that I may kiss my son’s little friend.”

Beatrice approached slowly, earnestly scanning the noble face of the mother of Alessandro. Then she sprang towards her, threw both arms round her neck, and burst into a violent fit of weeping.

“It must be so beautiful to have a mother!” sobbed she.

“Come over often and you shall always find a mother,” replied Giovanna Stradella, tenderly.

After that evening she often went over, the beautiful Marchesa, but only Ritta knew about it.

As soon as the Marchese had driven over to the house of the old lady with whom he played cards every day, his little daughter ran out into the garden, sprang over the wall, and took her place at the feet of that homely woman named Giovanna Stradella. She laid her little head in the lap of her motherly friend, chatted and laughed away, or listened to Alessandro's playing and singing. Ah! that was so beautiful! The rich child of the proud Marchese sat here in the dwelling of the poor, on a wooden stool, with laughing eyes and clear brow. Her splendid satin gown, with its embroidered hem, swept the floor; Giovanna's white cat often slept sweetly upon it. With delight the child ate the simple fruits and the little hard corn-cakes that Giovanna made herself; they tasted better to her than the rarest confections handed her at home upon silver plates. And then Alessandro always had so much to tell her about his music lessons, about the strict head master, and his schoolmates, during which he would sit beside her and roll her black soft locks over his fingers. His voice now began to increase wonderfully in power and beauty, and his mother and young friend were not long his only auditors. When he sang the people crowded into the narrow street under his window, and would cry, "Bravo! Bravissimo!" when he ceased, and loudly applaud him. At such times Giovanna Stradella experienced a childlike joy; the maiden, however, would grow pale as death, knit her brows, and close the window. She begged him never to sing, and was much happier and tenderer when once in a while an evening went by without music.

Thus passed many days, weeks, and years. For a long time Beatrice had not climbed over the wall as at first, for Ritta had laid a stone on their side on which she stepped up nicely, and on the other side Alessandro had built a little flight of steps, and always stood there at the appointed hour to give her his hand as she stepped over. In spite of all the safety, however, she would not let go his hand at once: sometimes they would walk hand in hand as far as his mother's little sitting-room, and when she went away they would not part at once, she would seat herself on the stone, he on the edge of the wall, and there they would long prattle away. The trees looked on earnestly, the moon threw around the two children her silver veil, the fountain mingled boldly with their light babbling, and the fragrance of the orange blossoms was wafted to and fro about the unconscious happy ones. Between these two shot up the pomegranate flower of love in richer and still richer colours, but they knew it not.

And so Alessandro grew to be sixteen, Beatrice fourteen years of age, and it was now time for the little one to be sent to an eminent convent, that noble nuns might give her the cultivation at that time considered necessary for a distinguished lady. So soon as the year in

the convent had expired, a music-master would instruct her in the art of playing the lute, and then her education would be deemed complete. The young girl dreaded the convent life, and the last evening before her departure, she sat beside Mother Giovanna and wept bitterly, although Alessandro reminded her how rapidly the past year had flown by, and tried to prove to her that one year was no longer than another. After she had taken leave, and was slowly following her young friend to the steps, she stopped a moment to pluck a pomegranate blossom, which she fastened to her girdle. But Alessandro, who saw it, tore the flower hastily away, and hid it in his bosom.

"What have you done?" he cried in horror. "Mother says whoever at parting breaks off or gives away a pomegranate blossom, brings death either to himself or to the receiver!"

"And you have taken it away. Must you, then, die?" she whispered, not less terrified than he.

"We shall see about that," he laughed, proudly. "Death has no claims upon me, for you did not bestow the flower upon me; I robbed you of it."

His confident look and tone reassured her: and when she stood in her father's garden, and he, after the old habit, lingered on the wall, she begged him with an urgent voice—"Sing me once more the mournful song you were singing when first I saw you. Do you remember?—about the star who loved the sun."

He sang her the song; never had his voice sounded clearer, never had the mournful modulations rung forth with a purer tone. The soft, melancholy music awakened strange pangs in these two young hearts, and when he had finished, both for the first time spread out their arms towards one another. Alessandro sprang down from his airy seat, pressed the maiden to his heart as she threw her arms around his neck, and their lips closed in tender kisses. Then Beatrice tore herself away. Ritta's voice sounded loudly:—"Adieu," they breathed over and over again—and in a few minutes the child sat in her chamber, whilst Ritta plaited her hair for the night.

When later in the evening the Marchese bowed over the couch of his child to impress upon her brow the good-night kiss, her face glowed as with the flush of fever, her breathing, too, was heavy and restless. In spite of Ritta's assurance that the Marchesina had gone to bed well and bright, the doctor was sent for to come at this late hour to the Luigi Palace. He came, too, at once; but when they awakened the sleeper in order that the wise man might snatch her from the clutches of death, she looked up with bright eyes, and laughed wildly at the very idea of being thought sick.

Alessandro sat a long, long while upon the wall and looked down into the dusky shades of the garden, where the white statues glimmered and the cool fountains rustled, and played with the pomegranate blossoms,

of which his mother had said that, broken or received at the moment of parting, it brought certain death.

* * * * *

The residence of the young maiden in the convent was prolonged at the wish of the Marchese. Out of one year grew two; then the father himself went to fetch her away; and she only left her cell to enter the travelling carriage which was to carry her to Rome and then to Venice. Here father and daughter tarried a few months in the house of a widowed and childless sister of the Marchese's; and Beatrice was charmed with the magic "City of Isles."

But a heavy sorrow must meet her here. A short time before the day appointed for their departure for Naples, her father was taken sick and died, and, accompanied by her aunt, she returned to the halls of her ancestors an orphan, much broken down in health, and in a deep melancholy.

It was a mild spring evening in March, when, after a quiet seclusion of four weeks, she walked through the garden for the first time in her mourning garments, and wended her way towards the wall, where now the pomegranate tree nodded towards her its bare branches as though for a greeting. Did so many years lie between now and the time when she mounted that disorderly stone-heap, a happy child? She felt very old, and the play of her childhood lay far behind her like a half-forgotten dream—the sorrow which had fallen upon her had blunted and wearied her. She looked musingly over towards the little cottage. Did Mother Giovanna still live? "But she would not recognize me," thought the maiden; "grief and tears have disfigured me and made me ugly." Sorrowfully she bowed down her head, and leaned her arm on the parapet of the wall. Where was Alessandro now? Suddenly the tones of a violin floated through the air; the notes swelled, a bold passage followed, then again a passionate melody, strange artistic tropes, adventurous runs, and last of all a melting adagio, so lovely, so bewitching, so incomparable, that the listener held her breath. She pressed her lips tightly together. "Oh, he has forgotten me!" she cried, with a bitter laugh. "He has his violin. How he must love it, the ugly brown thing, when he plays it so. But now he shall stop. I will not have him play the violin any more!" And in a trice she stood upon the wall, ran down the steps, up the house steps, and burst open the sitting-room door. "I will not hear the violin!" she cried, passionately.

Mother Giovanna, who stood at the table, cried out, as she held the little lamp in the air to light her in—"Holy Virgin! it is the child, the poor Marchesina! But how wondrous fair she has grown!" added the good woman.

Touched by the tender expression of her face, the young girl threw

herself into Giovanna's arms and burst into tears. "I am an orphan," she faltered out.

"That you can never be, *cara mia*," answered Giovanna, as she pressed the slender form to her heart. "You have yet a mother here, and a brother too—for see here is Alessandro. He has grown tall, hasn't he?"

The youth of now nineteen years came forward and held out his hand to her, looking at her silently, but with an expression of passionate wonderment. Beatrice on her side seemed struck with his appearance too. The beautiful boy had changed into the perfect youth; never had she seen a nobler form, a more faultless face. It was a wondrous evening. In spite of all Mother Giovanna's resistance, Beatrice took her accustomed place on the stool, whilst Alessandro sat opposite her in simple, dark apparel. He leaned his head upon his hand, and never took his eyes from his childhood's companion.

With talking they did not progress very rapidly, though; however much Madame Stradella might question or want to know, the two young creatures only conversed with their eyes. After an hour, Beatrice let Mother Giovanna wait on her to the steps, and did not even give her hand to Alessandro at parting. Then she said very gravely—"Mother Giovanna, this is the last time I can come to you. I shall not be able to enter your house again, but you must come often, very often, to me. It cannot be otherwise. Alessandro and Beatrice are no longer children."

The good woman promised to come, and Beatrice turned to go; but Giovanna, after the manner of women, called her back once more to tell her that her son was on the surest way to become a celebrated man, one who would receive the most brilliant proposals from all sides. He was already a teacher in the music school of Santa Maria di Loreto, and composed too, so that everyone was filled with amazement when he played his own pieces. He had also become a master in lute playing, and the most distinguished ladies in Naples besought him to instruct them in the art of music. This afforded him pleasure, honour, and income. "And yet," she concluded, sighing, "this beautiful life does not satisfy him; he is often sad as a caged bird; he wants to go out into the world, and I will willingly let him go. I would a thousand times rather pine away for yearning after him than that he should die of longing for what is out there."

Beatrice was long silent. At last she raised her head and said softly—"My aunt is seeking a master skilful enough to instruct me in the art of lute playing. Do you think your son has patience enough, and would feel inclined to torment himself with so unapt a pupil as I? If you think so, let him call upon my aunt, for I will have no other teacher than he."

When the young girl was alone this evening, she questioned her

mirror. "Am I really beautiful?" From out the mirror looked a blushing, finely-formed, youthful face, with great dark eyes. She had to confess it, this countenance was beautiful.

The next day, Alessandro Stradella called upon the old Marchesa, and requested the honour of being allowed to instruct her niece in the art of lute-playing. His earnest beauty and distinguished bearing made quite an impression upon the old lady, and she promised to use all her influence in his favour with the wilful little one. Ah! this wilful little one listened with a beating heart in the next room, and could have kissed her aunt's hands for joy.

And now matters progressed as was natural they should. The music was a golden chain which drew the two young hearts closer and closer together, and before the expiration of two months the flame of their love was fully kindled. Beatrice, of course, learned nothing; her little fingers were inflexible, and her otherwise melodious voice had no resonance in song; but she listened so much the more, for Alessandro played and sang nearly the whole hour long, thus enchanting everyone in the palace who had ears to hear. Thus, too, he sang himself deep into the heart of Beatrice; and now it would seem that this love must have terminated in happy possession—but then Alessandro would never have become the renowned Stradella.

To a great life belongs a great sorrow, and the heavenly rose of artithood and genius has sharper thorns than the earthly rose; none pluck it without receiving bloody wounds.

One evening, the young Marchesa Luigi besought her beautiful master to sing her the song about the Star and the Sun. Accidentally, the two were alone in the room; the setting sun glowed through the crimson curtain which hung before the open door of the balcony; the many exotic plants standing out there opened their cups and exhaled their fragrance. The maiden lay back in her chair, her head leaning upon her hand, and her long locks fell over her white arm. He sat upon a tabouret not far from her, the mandoline in his arms, and began to sing the song she longed to hear. The sweet sounds fell like pearls upon her ear. When the singer had finished the last verse, he threw down his lute, cast himself at the feet of his beloved, and cried—"Have pity upon me, most beautiful of all women! I am the poor star, you are the sun—do you not see that I shall die as he did, since you can never be mine, as the sun could not stoop to the star?"

Then she laughingly raised him up, and her whole happy, loving heart flowed towards him; then she said—"You shall not die, for I am not the sun. Why should I not be yours? I am my own mistress; I love you, and will never love another man than Alessandro Stradella. I give you heart and hand, rank and riches too; in exchange, I only ask one little sacrifice of you. Give me on our wedding day your violin, and promise only to sing for me, for me alone. I love you so

much that I am not willing to share your voice with any other being in the world; and I have been jealous of your violin since the first time you showed it to me. Now speak, will you be the patient captive of so much love?"

She leaned back and looked at him half questioningly, half triumphantly. But a chill of horror rushed over her when she saw him grow paler and paler, and met his fixed gaze. For a long time they uttered no words, but looked mutely into one another's eyes. At last, however, the maiden's heart beat so violently it seemed as though it would burst, but as she opened her lips to speak, he arose, stood before her and said slowly, "Is that your determination, Beatrice?"

"Yes."

"But I can and will be no captive. If you become my wife, you must be the wife of a musician, who works for himself and you, whose joys and sorrows, whose combats and victories you share. Your riches you may give to the poor; I cannot have them; I want only you and my art."

"I gave you the choice between me and your art," she said, passionately moved.

"Beatrice, do not sin so against us both. Place not your love so low. Leave off this cruel jest; be mine—the adored wife of the most blissful singer!"

"You err," she replied, catching her breath, and loosing her hand from his; "I will suffer no rival in the house and heart of my husband. But you will sacrifice your art to me, Alessandro? Look about you! Wealth and luxury surround you; your wife shall be your chief attendant; your mother shall live like a princess; but you must cease to be the singer Stradella, whom every fellow in the streets can hear; you must cease to adore other divinities when you have me: I cannot sing; I hate your violin—I hate your music."

Then he sent forth a hollow cry, pressed his face against her garment, and faltered, "May all the saints in Heaven forgive you and me. You will have it so; we are parted."

Then he rushed from the room.

Scarcely ten years had passed away before all Italy knew the name of Alessandro Stradella, and Mother Giovanna lived to feel the happiness of seeing her son laden down with honour and glory. Seldom is a composer and singer so appreciated during his life as was Stradella. The people would listen to no one else when he was to be heard; they called him not only the first violinist in Italy, but also the first singer, and prophesied for him as composer the greatest future. His beauty acquired for him the surname of "*Apollo della Musica*," and by-and-by they came to call him this alone, as though they had entirely forgotten his real name. The women all fell in love with him at first

sight ; he enjoyed his young life, too, and rejoiced over many a sweet flower that longingly turned its innocent face towards him ; but he rejoiced over them after the manner of the butterflies, for days or hours only. The Apollo della Musica, with his wondrously beautiful eyes and magnificent form, with his charming smile and earnest brow, seemed only bound to one lady, and that was St. Cecilia herself.

For about three years, particularly during his residence in Venice, Alessandro Stradella had devoted himself exclusively to composition, and nothing was more delightful than to listen to a madrigal composed and sung by him. He worked with great zeal upon an oratorio, "*San Giovanni Batista*," and it was permitted his mother to hear the first representation of this noble creation of her son. It was at Rome, in the church of the "*Holy Apostles*." The beautiful halls were filled with the most distinguished clergy—indeed, it was even said that the Holy Father himself listened behind a grating—and an innumerable multitude of people, of high and low degree. Madame Stradella sat in the centre of the church, in anxious expectation.

Leaning against a pillar near her was a young man attired after the fashion of the Venitian nobility, and closely muffled in a black cloak. His deathly-pale, foreboding face from the first alarmed the good woman. He seemed very restless, too, constantly muttered incomprehensible words between his teeth, and often clutched at his breast, as though overpowered by a feeling of suffocation. A deep pity filled Giovanna's heart, so that finally she turned to him, and said, in a gentle voice, "If any burden lies upon your heart, be it a sorrow or sin, wait patiently awhile—the tones which will come down from above will make your heart free and ease your soul ; Alessandro has already played and sung consolation to many."

Then the stranger smiled a ghastly smile, and said, "Waiting will be somewhat hard for me, my good woman : but since you say it will reward one for the trouble, I will quietly keep my place. Afterwards I will deliver my thanks in person to Alessandro Stradella, and as you seem to know him, you can lead me to him."

"Willingly, dear sir."

Just then the first notes streamed forth, the voices were lifted up, a violin sang—the oratorio began. Like the fragrance of fresh roses, the voice of Stradella moved through the solemn halls ; like a golden day the splendid work of tones unfolded itself ever clear and clearer to the enraptured auditors, and passed over. As the last notes died away there arose a rushing and roaring—a universal shout of gratitude, unmistakable signs of joy and wonderment. And the rushing and roaring would not be stilled ; it increased mightily, and no one stirred from his place : it was as though the auditors could not leave the church without a last benediction of music. Then Stradella arose once more ; the instruments were still, the organ played a solemn Riternell, and

the singer gave the most beautiful church aria that ever master wrote. It commences with the cry of supplication of a bruised and contrite soul—

“Se i miei sospiri
Oh, Dio! placassero —”

Perhaps no mortal voice has ever sung it as he sang it, for it was the darling of his heart—his dearest creation.

Giovanna melted into tears of the highest maternal bliss. She gazed up at the choir in an ecstasy, her hands tightly clasped, and would not have felt the least astonished had she seen her son in the glittering garments of an angel, with shining pinions. A groan at her side made her start. There stood the singular stranger, with his face covered up, like one crushed by sorrow and repentance. “Do you feel better now?” she said, joyously.

Then he drew himself up, and a little, sharp-pointed dagger fell with a ring to the ground. She stooped down and picked it up, saying, gravely, “He, up there, has undoubtedly taken a great sin from your heart by his music. Give me the murderous weapon in token of this hour, and as a pledge that you will not forget what a miracle has been performed on you. And in order that you may understand wherefore the courage came to me to speak thus to you, know that I am the mother of Alessandro Stradella.”

Then the stranger seized the speaker's two hands, kissed them as reverently as though his lips were touching the image of a saint, and whispered, “Since you are his mother, you must hear my confession, that I may go forth from here entirely whole. Step behind that pillar with me, that the people may not crowd past us.” And when this was done, he continued: “I came hither to murder your son. You shudder. I cannot speak otherwise—you hear the truth. When Alessandro Stradella left Venice, the dearest, most beautiful woman in the world, Hortensia, my affianced, followed him. Look! there she stands on the left side of the church, opposite the choir, leaning on the arm of her old nurse. In spite of the concealing veil I recognise her face, her form. Her eyes are upturned; she seeks *him* who has bewitched her. I have cursed this magic—*now* I comprehend it; it has taken the dagger from out my hands. Through me shall no hair of your son's head be touched. Go, Signora, tell him so: and may all the saints in Heaven be with him. Farewell!”

No words are adequate to depict the rapture with which the mother pressed her son to her heart an hour later, or the emotion with which she related to him the occurrence in the church. She never parted from the Venitian's little dagger, even carrying it with her to the grave, which opened to her before many moons had come and gone. The history of the marvellously beautiful, distinguished young Venitian lady made quite a noise in Rome, particularly through the circumstance

of the charming fugitive returning home with her betrothed shortly after the representation of "San Giovanni Batista."

After the death of his mother, Alessandro Stradella resided alternately in Rome, Florence, and Bologna; only Naples, he never touched upon again. Did he know that the love of his youth, who, shortly after his separation from her, was entitled "the most beautiful maiden of Naples," had, after years of seclusion, bestowed her hand upon an elderly, peculiar Marchese of Genoa, a man known by the name of the Music-hater?

It was in the spring of the year 1678 that the celebrated singer and composer yielded to the repeated entreaties of the city of Genoa, that he should himself conduct his new opera, "Le Forza dell Amor Paterno," at the carnival. The Apollo della Musica was received as a king, the most distinguished citizens contended for the honour of lodging him; the men feared him, the women adored him; fêtes thronged upon fêtes. The people crowded around him in the streets with the cry "Evviva il divine," and besieged his dwelling to hear him sing. He would open his window in the still hour of the night, and sing and play the violin to the poor, to whom the glittering theatre doors were closed. He received an invitation for the evening before the opera, to the house of the richest man in Genoa, the Marchese Memmo. Stradella's friends were astonished at this, and related many strange anecdotes about the old man, whom they called the "music-hater." They said that since his nineteenth year, when he had been jilted by a beautiful singer, he had not heard a single note of music, and that he would flee from every sound in the least degree resembling it. His palace was built in the centre of an immense garden, so that the song of the street musicians and the humming of the children could not reach his ear.

"And his wife?" asked Stradella, half astonished, half amused.

"She is said not to be outdone by him," was the reply, "and is as proud and misanthropic as beautiful. She is seldom seen; only goes to church even during silent mass. She hates music as much as he; why, about a year after she was married, she snatched the instrument from the hands of a poor fiddler who stood begging at the church door, and trampled it under her feet. She afterwards, it is true, threw a valuable trinket into his hat; but nevertheless the poor fiddle was destroyed. The Marchese, her husband, seldom gives a ball, but when he does throw open his saloon, palace and garden resemble the abode of some mighty magician."

The Marchese Memmo had extended his invitations this time to a wide circle. It was, at bottom, a fête of revenge, a humiliation to that "bold strolling player" who had dared stir up such a tumult in proud Genoa. He declared to his acquaintances—friends he had none—that

he intended to show the lovesick women of Genoa how unmoved his own wife, the most beautiful of them all, would be by the charms of this "fiddling Apollo," how she alone would have pride and courage enough to repel the bold adventurer who had dared to force his way into the highest circles. Beforehand he rejoiced at the idea of the surprise and indignation his wife, who for some time past had been more intolerant and more violent than ever, would feel at seeing a musician stand before her. She had no suspicion that anyone would dare to invite an "Apollo della Musica" to a fête at her house, and she never would permit it.

The evening of the fête arrived at last. Alessandro Stradella betook himself to the Palazzo Memmo. The darling of the nobility had already seen much splendour and magnificence, he had long been at home in the palaces of the great, and familiar with the brilliance and luxury of their life—yet upon his entrance into the showy apartments of the Marchese he was astounded. A world of fabulous beauty opened before him—he stood a moment as one dazzled; richly adorned ladies and cavaliers swayed to and fro in the enormous rooms which were bright as day. The pictures on the walls were almost entirely covered with the strangest, rarest flowers, which looked down oddly and dreamily with their flower eyes upon the merry throng. Valuable marble statues arose from the grass, vases of precious stone and golden vessels of artistic form were judiciously distributed about, fountains of perfumed water glittered between the flowers, the cupboards groaned beneath the weight of the sumptuous plate and refreshments, which seemed to have been gathered from all parts of the world. The folding-doors stood open into the garden, which was illuminated with globes of diverse colours; marble steps, on which were laid velvet coverings, led down to it, and wave upon wave of fragrance and cool air were wafted into the halls.

The host, a tall figure with the air of a veteran and the eyes of youth, approached the celebrated guest immediately upon his entrance, bade him welcome with a courteous smile, and bowed low in token of acknowledgment when Alessandro requested the honour of being presented to the Marchesa. With a scarcely perceptible arching of the bushy brows he requested the singer to follow him, and walked slowly through the suite of sumptuous apartments. As they moved along—the Marchese attired with more brilliancy than taste, Alessandro Stradella in simple black velvet, his rich chestnut hair falling in curls upon his shoulders, his faultless form proudly erect, advancing like a prince with his victorious eyes flitting over the assembly, and with an enchanting smile returning the greetings showered upon him from all sides—there was no man's heart but Memmo's that did not fear *this rival*, no woman whose glances did not hail with ecstasy the Apollo della Musica. Finally his guide stopped, and from amidst a group of tropical plants and blooming orange trees a lady stepped forth, dressed in a simple

white satin robe, a bouquet of pomegranate blossoms at her bosom, pomegranate blossoms in her dark hair.

"Marchesa, I bring you a far-famed singer and violinist," said Memmo, in his hard, dry voice; "a singular guest in our house."

She raised her eyelids and looked upon the new comer, but she gave him no greeting—she only gazed at him, whilst face and neck grew white as marble; and then she laid her hand upon her heart, with a quiver of pain about the lips. He, too, grew pale as death, took a step backwards, as though awe-struck, then stretched out his hand towards the beloved of his youth, grasped hers which she extended to him as though in a dream, bent over the cold fingers with a kiss, and whispered, in the deepest emotion, "It was your will, Beatrice!"

It often happens that a single word, yes, even a single gesture, will break asunder the bonds which have confined the poor human heart for long years. The Marchesa Memmo breathed heavily, and murmured, "It was my will, you are right; but I have been severely punished for it."

Then she cast a freezing glance at her husband, who at a little distance watched the movements of the two, apparently perfectly calm, and she said, aloud, "You have been so kind as to bring me, in the person of your guest, the dearest playmate of my youth; accept my thanks for it, Marchese. Alessandro Stradella resided close to the Palazzo Luigi in Naples."

Without awaiting a reply, she took the singer's arm and went slowly down the marble steps into the fragrant garden. He walked beside her as one in a dream; the years of separation, the bitterness of the parting hour, disappeared in a sea of blissful sensations; *she* was once more the little capricious Beatrice, *he* her playmate and friend. But the pomegranate blossoms did not glitter as then upon the tree in the little yard, they bloomed now upon the proud bosom of a queenly woman. He begged her softly for a flower; she loosened one from her bouquet and handed it to him.

"That flower at parting did not kill us, after all," said she, with the laugh of a child.

"Not our bodies—but your heart," he replied, mournfully.

"Why, does yours live?" she asked.

"I feel now that it lives, for it loves you! Do you not know that true love can never die?"

"And you? Have you forgotten that true love can awaken the dead? My heart arose from the dead when your eyes met mine, Alessandro, and it will not easily fall asleep again."

They remained together during the entire evening, in spite of the whispering around them, in spite of the smiles and glances of astonishment and derision. Careless of all, they gave themselves up to the exquisite bliss of finding one another again, and—to their love.

It was as though they had a foreboding that death would come upon them on the morrow, and that only one intoxicating night upon earth was awarded them. The usually pale, stern Beatrice now looked fresh and blooming as a rose, or like a young maiden by the side of her betrothed; and the Apollo della Musica had never been more beautiful than upon this night. The breath of melancholy was blown away from his brow, and he sat there beside the only woman he had ever loved, happy as a young god.

The hours rushed by; already weariness, the destroyer of all earthly joys, stalked through the throng of guests, the candles seemed to burn less brightly, the faded flowers and drooping ringlets denoted that the height of the fête was past—when suddenly the Marchesa, with glowing countenance, and looking around her with a contemptuous smile, begged for a song. "Give us just one of your songs, so that this evening may be memorable to us all," said she.

The noise caused by this request was like a storm. Music—song—in the Palace Memmo! Did not the walls tremble? Were not the marble divinities precipitated from their pedestals? Did not the earth open to swallow up the offender who dared make such a request within such precincts? All eyes sought the master of the house. He had disappeared, and now the guests ventured to crowd around the Apollo della Musica, with fresh entreaties. He took his stand upon an estrade opposite the Marchesa; they fetched him a mandoline from the palace of the beautiful Contessa Grimani, which was not far from the Palazzo Memmo, and, after a sweet, simple Ritornell, Alessandro Stradella, with the full magic of his incomparable voice, struck up that song about the star who loved the sun. His eyes were turned towards Beatrice, who answered his glowing gaze with a smile of perfect bliss. She had in this moment forgotten everything—her whole life full of the bitterest grief, her gloomy husband, whom she had followed, once in a moment of despair, into that solitude which then had seemed so alluring: only one thing had she not forgotten—*her love*. He was there, and with him a whole heaven; and these minutes, these hours belonged to them! Who could have thought of the events of the morrow?

The song had died away—she did not ask a second one. Yet a stolen pressure of the hands, yet a few softly breathed words passed between the lovers, then she whispered, "Addio! After the representation of your opera to-morrow, do not forget your promise! I will await your coming at the garden gate." Then they parted—the halls were empty—the Marchesa retired to her chamber without meeting her husband again.

The next morning when she awakened, her maid brought her word that her husband had been compelled to undertake a little journey, that he hoped to be with her again next day, and would then explain to her the mystery of his sudden departure. Beatrice's heart rejoiced;

she drove to mass to return thanks for the happiness of the past evening, and to implore protection for her beloved in all his walks.

In the evening the great theatre at Genoa was crowded as never before. The house beamed rather with the forms of those who filled it than with the candles intended to light it; the new opera of Alessandro Stradella had attracted all the élite of Genoa. In the box of the Marchese Memmo sat a single person—Beatrice. She was dressed in black velvet, and carried a bouquet of pomegranate blossoms in her hand. When the Apollo della Musica appeared, great rejoicings arose. The pale face of the Marchesa brightened. She saw the beloved one radiant with beauty, honoured, adored by the exultant multitude; she heard melodies of charming grace, which gushed from his very soul; an inexpressible rapture overflowed her.

The opera was received with enthusiasm, the applause increased with every scene, and at the finale a storm of joy broke out, which raged through the house as though it would crack the walls. From every box flowers and laurel wreaths were cast upon the stage, the women waved their handkerchiefs, the men cried, "Bravo! Evviva l'Apollo della Musica." And through the open door the people crowded in from the streets, and echoed, "Evviva Alessandro Stradella!"

It was a scene of passionate delight such as can be enacted in Italy alone.

Beatrice's cheeks were flooded with tears of joy. Deeply affected, she leaned forward, and the brilliant bouquet of pomegranate blossoms dropped from her hand and fell at the singer's feet. And of all the flower offerings the hero selected this one, and, pressing it to his heart, bowed low before the box of the Marchesa Memmo.

The next day a frightful rumour ran through the city of Genoa. The celebrated singer and composer of the opera, "*La Forza dell'Amor Paterno*" had been found murdered in the garden of the Marchese Memmo, but a few hours after the most brilliant celebration of his life. The deceased wore a bouquet of pomegranate blossoms on his bosom, and around his mouth still hovered the smile of happiness.

In spite of every investigation, the murderer was undiscovered. But the people almost tore the favourite old servant of the Marchese to pieces because he approached the crowd of mourners with horrible grimaces, and the words, "Why all this disturbance? It is only a great singing bird they have killed here. My master must have peace!"

Not only Genoa—all Italy deplored the loss of Alessandro Stradella. They bore him to rest like a prince. On the day of his interment the unhappy Marchesa retired for ever from the world. She took the veil in the Convent of Santa Anna at Guastalla.

THE HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

IT is impossible to overlook the fact that novels form a very important item in the reading of the present day. If the literature of the time be taken as an index of the popular taste, the eagerness with which works of fiction are sought after leaves us in little doubt as to the state of public opinion. The novel, indeed, is to the nineteenth century what the drama was to the age of Elizabeth; and Marlow, Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson then held the place since taken by such writers as Scott, Bulwer, and Dickens. Everyone reads novels in these days. How many hours of poverty and pain have been cheered and lightened by the delightful pages of such authors as Walter Scott or George Eliot! It is, then, with no feelings of ill-will that the writers of novels ought to be regarded. It is to these talented persons that England is indebted for some of the highest treasures of its literature. Doubtless much worthless and idle trash is poured forth from the press; but if it finds readers for the moment, it soon passes away and is forgotten. There is no reason why the good should be neglected because, like everything else in this world, it is not unmixed with evil. But to turn to the more immediate object of this paper.

The early English prose romances, besides their intrinsic curiosity, afford us most interesting illustrations of the manner and mode of thinking of our ancestors. They were, indeed, the *Waverley Novels* of the olden time, giving as much delight to our forefathers as the writings of Sir Walter Scott yield to ourselves to-day. One can hardly conceive a more extraordinary fiction than the *Life of Virgilius*. There is also the famous *History of Friar Bacon*, containing "the wonderful things that he did in his life, and also the manner of his death. Very pleasant and delightful to be read"—as the title-page quaintly informs us.

It is curious to remark the liberties which have been taken from very early times with the names of some of the great heathen poets. There can be little doubt that the poet of the Augustan era and the necromancer of the dark ages are one and the same person. Similar honours have been conferred also on Horace in the neighbourhood of Palestrina, where he is still regarded as a powerful and benevolent wizard. Strange that the most genial of social bards should meet with such a fate! Perhaps the account of the visit to the Shades, in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, may have caused Virgil to be honoured in the like manner. The *Life of Virgilius*, one of the most quaint of these mediæval tales, probably derived its origin from the fictions of the East. The incident of Virgil releasing the fiend from the hole in which he was confined presents a

strong resemblance to the tale of the Fisherman and the Genie in the "Arabian Nights."

In speaking of the historical romance, however, it is not necessary to go quite so far back as these rude fantastic fragments of days long passed away; neither must we dwell long on the comparatively modern effusions of now forgotten literature represented by such names as Mademoiselle de Scuderi and Calprenade.

De Scuderi was born at Hâvre, but came to Paris at an early period of her life, and there resided till her death, in 1701, when she was in the ninety-fourth year of her age. Her books, once so popular, are now quite numbered among the things that were. Their very names even are nearly forgotten. Who at the present time can boast of any knowledge of the "Grand Cyrus"? "Clélie" is the name of another romance by the same prolific writer: it consists of ten volumes octavo of about eight hundred pages each, and was printed at Paris in 1656.

The heroic romance, when verging on its decline, was attacked by genius almost equal to that by which the tales of chivalry had formerly been laughed out of countenance by Cervantes. Molière's "Précieuses Ridicules"—the people were called *Précieuses* who formed the coterie of the Hôtel Rambouillet—which appeared in 1659, and "Les Héros de Roman, Dialogue," of Boileau, did for the heroic romance what the author of "Don Quixote" had in a previous age accomplished for chivalry. About the year 1670 pedantic learning and abstruse speculations on physics and astronomy were much the fashion with the ladies of Paris. It was at that time that we first encounter the wonderful creature, then so strange, now so common, called *une femme savante*—in more homely terms, "a blue stocking." After Molière had exposed the affectation and false taste of these absurd persons, the character of *une précieuse* ceased to be an object of ambition to the ladies of Paris. It cannot, however, be said that they became wiser; for, though no longer reading the romantic pages of "Cyrus" or of "Clélie," they turned to the treatises of Des Cartes and the philosophy of Plato, regarding love as a weakness, and marriage as superfluous.

The extravagance of euphuism, or a symbolical jargon of the same class, predominates in the romances of Calprenade and de Scuderi, of which Sir Walter Scott has given us a specimen in the "Monastery," in the character of Sir Percy Shafton. In the days of Queen Elizabeth the gallant knights of the period, it is true, no longer vowed to heaven, the peacock, and the ladies to perform some feat of extravagant chivalry in which they endangered the lives of others as well as their own; yet still the language of the lovers to their ladies was in the same exalted term which Amadis would have addressed to Oriana before encountering a dragon for her sake. The reign also of Elizabeth being that of a maiden queen, was distinguished by the outward decorum of her courtiers, and especially the affectation of the deepest deference to the sovereign.

We find specimens of this exalted and false sentiment even in the splendid poetry of Spencer; but the fashion did not last long in England.

And yet there was a time when these wearisome and absurd books were great favourites. Rousseau tells us, in his "Confessions," that in his boyhood much time was devoted by him to the perusal of heroic romance. He acknowledges that he and his father used to sit up during the night devouring the adventures of "Oroondate," a novel by Calprenade, till warned by the chirping of the swallows at the window of the approach of day. Accordingly, many incidents of the "Heloise" may be traced in these novels. But the "Heloise" of Rousseau, once so famous, is now as much a dead letter as the rest of these works; nor need we regret the circumstance, for though occasionally we may meet with a fine passage or an eloquent description, still, as a whole, it can be viewed in no other light than that of a most dreary and wearisome performance.

The real historical romance, then, with which at the present day everyone is so familiar is quite a modern creation, at any rate so far as this country is concerned. Sir Walter Scott, Lord Lytton, and James are its most celebrated representatives. In handling the subject, the plan generally adopted by these writers has been to take some period of history, and introduce real persons and events. While the historian would didactically describe the prevailing manners and customs of any particular age or country, the historical novelist strives to place his readers among the scenes themselves. Instead of describing the vices of the day, for instance, he would rather single out some individual and let us see the effects of a licentious state of society as depicted in a living character. How well the career of Lord Dalgarno, in the "Fortunes of Nigel," brings before us the wild and reckless life of a gallant in the reign of James the First; to say nothing of the admirable way in which the character of that learned and uncouth monarch is sketched in the same novel! I would just refer to a short passage where the master of a French ordinary, at that time a newly invented institution in this country, the Chevallier de Beaujeu, gratifies Nigel with a description of the wonderful culinary feats performed by the maître de cuisine to the Maréchal Strozzi, and which quite surpasses any of the accounts of the recent dinners where the consumption of horseflesh has formed part of the entertainment.

This great artist, we are told, maintained his master's table with twelve covers every day during the long and severe blockade of Leithe. Although he had nothing better to place on it than the quarter of a carrion horse now and then, and the grass and weeds that grew on the ramparts, "with one thistle-head and a nettle or two, he could make soupe for twenty guests—an haunch of a little puppy dog made a rôti des plus excellens; but his coup de maître was when the rendition—what you

call the surrender—took place and 'appened ; and then he made out of the hind quarter of one salted horse forty-five couverts ; that the English and Scottish officers and nobility, who had the honour to dine with monseigneur upon the rendition, could not tell what the devil any one of them were made upon at all."

Who cannot recall the delight with which he has read for the first time some of the masterpieces of the great writers of fiction ? It is the liberty to blend the fancies of his own imagination with the real facts and characters of history which gives to the novelist such a wand of enchantment. He can throw entirely into the background the uninteresting details of human events, and concentrate all the light on such passages as are really calculated to produce impressions. It is easy to see what an immense advantage this gives to the writer for the creation of interest and the addition of life to his pictures. The historian is oppressed with the prodigious number of details with which he is encumbered : from all this the historical novelist escapes.

Queen Elizabeth is well drawn in Hume's History, but the Elizabeth of "Kenilworth" is the one which is oftenest present to the mind. If we hear of Richard Cœur de Lion, we immediately conjure up the inimitable picture of the crusading hero in "Ivanhoe" and the "Talisman." Harold would be but an empty name to most but for Bulwer's gorgeous romance. How fine a picture has this same writer left us of the state of society in England during the reign of Edward the Fourth in the "Last of the Barons !" How masterly are the scenes in which he traces the rising of the trading spirit into importance, under the patronage of the merchant king, and paints the gradual decline and fall of the power of the Barons under the type of their order, the great Earl of Warwick ! How tenderly is the captive king, Henry the Sixth, dwelt upon as we see him looking out from his prison-window in the Tower to gaze upon the first beams of the rising sun, or hear him moralizing to his starling and his spaniel over the vanity and emptiness of earthly splendour ! How faithfully also has this accomplished writer revived for us the pictures of classical days, breathing into the dead bones of antiquity the spirit of modern life ! We can fancy the streets of the long buried Pompeii full of active and crowded existence. Under the wand of the magician we are led through the every-day scenes of Roman life in its most varied and luxurious era. We recline with him at the banquet ; we accompany him to the bath—that great delight of ancient life ; we gaze with him at the savage spectacle of the amphitheatre, which many must remember to have seen so wonderfully realised in Gérôme's picture, "Ave Cæsar, morituri te salutant !" We see the crowded galleries rising tier above tier, shaded from the heat of the sun by outstretched awnings ; we hear the applause when some quick stroke of the adversary has laid the brave gladiator in the dust for ever ; we shudder as we behold

the cruel hook thrust into the still quivering flesh, and follow the gory traces in the sand of the arena as another victim is dragged away to make room for others yet to come.

Though the characters are fictitious, yet they are so well drawn that they appear like realities, and not shadows. Each is well defined, possessing an individuality that leaves a distinct impression on the mind. The fair and noble Ione, the graceful and luxurious Sallust, the gloomy Arbaces—type of the dark mysteries of the old religions which were even then giving way to the pure radiance of the Christian faith—and, above all, the gem of the whole story, the simple and ideal Nydia, the poor blind flower-girl, with her touching and mysterious fate—are creations of a genius which must always be remembered with pleasure.

And then, once more to revert to Sir Walter Scott, how impossible is it to hear the name of Louis the Eleventh without thinking of Scott and Victor Hugo's graphic portrait of that crafty and superstitious sovereign. Inspiring terror into the breasts of all who approach him, and himself the slave of the most abject fear, we see him ordering some unhappy victim of his displeasure to be thrown into the lowest depth of a loathsome dungeon, or shut up for years to live a "death in life" in an iron cage, an invention of his own of which his Majesty was very proud; and then, a few moments after, we behold the wretched creature clad in garments which the meanest of his courtiers would have scorned to wear, kneeling before the little leaden images fastened to the rim of his cap, and praying their aid to relieve his conscience of some fresh piece of meditated villainy—so fulfilling the words of Shakespeare that "conscience doth make cowards of us all."

It is needless, however, to multiply instances of the genius of these great masters of the art of fiction. To see how superior they are to the writers of their class in other countries, we have only to compare one of the works referred to above with any similar production of the French school by such authors as Dumas or Victor Hugo. When either of these talented men attempts to describe any historical person or event, the result, though often interspersed with epigrams and wit, usually resembles more a burlesque than anything else in the world. Who could form any idea of English life from such a picture as is given of it in "*L'Homme qui Rit*"? Of course, when a Frenchman undertakes to write about England, we must expect to find a good many mistakes. Even in his account of the boxing-match (an amusement in which the French imagine the English pass all their leisure) there are the most absurd mistakes, such as considering "a round" to mean an interval of repose. Both the combatants are accompanied to the ground by "Dr. Eleanor Sharp," whose name might give a gleam of hope to the ladies now doing battle for their privileges of employment; but, alas, it is clear from the context that Dr. Eleanor is a *man*!

E. B.

VERA.

THE train stopped. The conductor shouted, "Holmes' Hill." It was an express train, about to fly on again immediately; and Vera had scarcely time to bid adieu to stiff old Mrs. Murray, and to be helped out by Mr. Murray, who had been her protectors on the journey. A carriage was waiting at a little distance—an old-fashioned affair, that looked like a small caravan.

"Is that Miss Nesbitt's carriage?" Mr. Murray asked of one of the porters.

"Yes, sir."

"Come, then, my dear, there's no time to lose," said the old gentleman, hastening with Vera to the carriage, speaking to the coachman, and giving directions to a porter about the luggage. "Good-bye once more, Miss Vera! I hope we shall hear good reports of your health, and—and of all the rest."

He was gone before Vera could thank him for his good wishes, even had she desired; but she did not. She was too much vexed at that last hesitating clause. She was sure now that her mamma had told him and Mrs. Murray the whole story. This was what had made him roll up his eyes and quote Dr. Watts, and talk vaguely about the horrible sin of disobeying one's pastors and masters.

Well, they were gone, anyway. Now for Aunt Nesbitt. Vera sat in the ancient chariot, and waited while her luggage was fastened on behind. She heard the men swear about one box, and it was finally decided that it should be left, and sent over later by "Robbie Crutch." Her consent was not even asked by Miss Nesbitt's wilful old servant. Vera felt this to be an additional indignity. Perhaps even *he* knew! Perhaps Miss Nesbitt could no more keep anything to herself than mamma.

The carriage drove off. Vera leaned back in her seat, unhappy enough; but just for the moment more sulky than miserable. Her natural guardians were not content with breaking her heart: they must needs make her ridiculous.

Up hill and down; over a passable road, through pretty scenery and cultivated fields, with pleasant woodlands in the foreground, and a long sweep of lofty hills beyond: bonnie hills of the bonnie land. That was what Vera saw as the fat horses trotted leisurely. Many girls in her state of mind would have regretted that the country had not been desolate and bare; but Vera was neither sentimental nor silly. Because she could not have all she wanted in the world, she

felt to be no reason why she should avoid any chance pleasantness which might come in her way.

Thus the carriage drew near Miss Nesbitt's. Vera saw an old-fashioned, red-brick house, with wide-spreading wings, half hidden among fine tall cedars and other trees.

Driving through the avenue, the coachman drew up his horses at the hall steps. Out of the house came a tall, erect, elderly lady, rather a handsome one; with a sufficiently kindly face, had it not been for the satirical expression of the mouth, and the sharp gleam of the grey eyes. Vera had never seen this relative, her mother's aunt, but once, and that was some years before. She looked eagerly at this new jailer, as she mentally called her.

"How do you do, Vera?" said Miss Nesbitt, holding out her hand to welcome the young lady, and speaking with as much matter-of-fact composure as though she had parted with her only yesterday. "Drive round with the luggage, Thomas; it must be taken up the back stairs."

Thomas touched his horses, and they disappeared round the side of the house. Miss Nesbitt turned again to Vera. "Hum!" said she. "Your eyes are not red. I expected you to arrive drowned in tears. Both your sisters did."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, aunt: I seldom indulge in tears," replied Vera, with stately coolness.

There was an amused, rather approving look in the elder woman's eyes, which Vera did not notice.

"You are the third," she continued. "I have had one visit in turn from each of my grand-nieces."

Vera, completely at odds with the world just then, looking upon most people, and especially her aunt, as her natural enemies, felt so irritated by the sarcastic smile on the thin lips, that she could not resist throwing the gauntlet down at once.

"Have you ever had any other prisoners, Aunt Nesbitt?"

"Oh, no," replied the old lady, perfectly unmoved. "Mine is a very private mad-house indeed, reserved exclusively for my affectionate young relatives."

She laughed as she spoke. Vera could not help laughing also.

"Good!" said Aunt Nesbitt. "Make haste with your toilette; luncheon is on the table. I must eat, at all events."

"So must I," said Vera. "I am dreadfully hungry, and the journey was a long one. I will just throw off my hat and cloak here."

Aunt Nesbitt nodded her head as she led the way to the dining-room, ruminating. "This girl is made of different stuff from her sisters," thought she. "Veronica Nesbitt, she reminds me of you in the old, old days."

They sat down to table. The luncheon was excellent, and Vera ate with an excellent appetite, talking occasionally.

"You are not a bit like a heroine," observed Aunt Nesbitt.

"You will find me quite enough of one," said Vera.

"Do you mean that as a threat?" asked her aunt.

"No," said Vera. "I did mean to be disagreeable; but I made up my mind last night that it would be silly. I should punish myself more than you, aunt, so I intend to make the best of my life here that I can."

"It is very dull here."

"I shall not mind that for a while."

"But you are to stay here until you are cured."

Vera smiled slightly.

"I understand. You think you are likely to stay always," said Aunt Nesbitt. "So did Jane when she first came; she stayed three months. So did Josephine; she held out five. Imagine what I must be like."

"I should say it was you who got tired of them," returned Vera. "You found husbands for them both."

"Yes; rich Mr. Musters happened to come this way that year, and he fell in love with Jane. Jane decided that diamonds and riches were worth more than the future love in a cottage she had been dreaming of."

"And Josephine turned to good works and married one of your parsons."

"Yes: and I was more glad of that marriage than the other. I wonder who will carry *you* off?"

"So do I," retorted Vera, incipient defiance in her tone.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Aunt Nesbitt. "Here comes Maria," she added, as a middle-aged maid appeared. "Perhaps you would like to go and see your prison-cell. Maria, show Miss Raymond her rooms."

A large, pleasant bedroom and a dressing-room, handsomely furnished in an old-fashioned way, with a lovely look-out from the windows. Maria was in ecstasies at Miss Raymond's praise of the rooms and the place altogether, asked for her keys, and began taking the things out of her trunks. Vera sat down by one of the dressing-room windows, leaned her elbows on the sill, and gazed wistfully out over the grand and charming scene.

Suddenly she felt the half-bitter, half-bewildered composure, which had supported her during the journey and the interview, begin to give way. She closed the door into the bedroom, where Maria was still busy, turned the key softly, and let her hysterical passion of tears have its course. She wept for awhile as if her heart were bursting, careful to restrain the sound of her sobs. Presently a reaction set in.

"There: I think I have cried enough," she said, with an odd little choking sound, meant to be a laugh. "I have been keeping it in for a whole day and night."

A fatality seemed to attend the Raymond family. Before Vera, two sisters had, in turn, been exiled for the same offence which she had committed; a determination to love the wrong man. An unpardonable sin in Mrs. Raymond's creed—their mother.

Vera could remember when the oldest sister, Jane, was sent to Aunt Nesbitt's dwelling. She was thirteen then. Later, Josephine was despatched. As Vera grew up, she vowed that no such destiny should overtake her. The very rapidity with which her sisters had recovered from the dreams and trouble of their first love, and come back home engaged girls, soon to be married, had excited the wonder of Vera: but she thought they must be very sensible. At eighteen Vera came out. Mrs. Raymond delighted in her. Vera was her favourite child: and Vera seemed to care only for riches and the desirable pomps of life: no fear that *she* would be falling in love with the wrong man.

Some wonderful *parti* made his appearance in society, and Mrs. Raymond determined that he should fall a prey to Vera's charms. The girl made a grand success. She was the beauty of the season; had a crowd of admirers always about her. Her witticisms were quoted; her singing and dancing pronounced adorable; her fair-haired beauty was unsurpassed.

She flirted outrageously; but her mother did not mind that: it would only serve to excite the rich Mr. Osborne: he for whom Mrs. Raymond launched into extravagances that she could ill afford. Mr. Osborne struggled against his fate, as eligible men, who have learned to believe themselves hunted by pretty girls and match-making mothers, are wont to do; and then fell a hopeless victim. Mrs. Raymond had no fears; she was sure that when he proposed, Vera would accept him. Mr. Osborne made the mother his confidante. He wished, before addressing Vera, to be certain that she had learned to care for him. The foolish man wanted to be loved by his future wife! Mrs. Raymond acquiesced, and threw them much together.

Alas! A short while, and the horrified Mrs. Raymond discovered that Vera, like her sisters had done, was "making a fool of herself." She had fallen in love with that handsome young fellow, Moore Rivington; a man of good family, and all that, but poor as a church mouse. Falling in love was not the worst of it: they were secretly engaged.

Mrs. Raymond did not fly into a rage; she only talked reason, laughed, and carried Vera off on a round of visits, ending with a sojourn at a fashionable watering-place, where Vera was made a queen of. And she enjoyed her sovereignty so much, that the mother believed Mr. Osborne's victory was to be an easy one.

But her short-lived hopes received a second fall. Mr. Osborne proposed to Vera, and was refused. Some other eligible man proposed also, and he shared the same fate. Mrs. Raymond went nearly out of

her mind; but it was of no avail. Vera did not shrink and moan, as her sisters had done; neither threatened, like them, to go into a ritualistic convent or kill herself.

"I only love Moore Rivington," she said, with a cold composure that her mother called obstinacy. "It would be a sin to marry another man. I will not do it." And Mr. Moore Rivington said the same thing on his own part to Mrs. Raymond.

Vera was impervious to anger, sneers, prayers. She grew pale and thin, but she would not yield. Mr. Osborne she *would not* have: it should be Moore Rivington or nobody.

"You shall go over the border to your Aunt Nesbitt's," cried Mrs. Raymond in despair. "She soon brought Jane and Josephine to their senses, and she shall bring you to yours."

So that was how the exile to Aunt Nesbitt's came about. She was a very rich, whimsical, tyrannical old maid, as Mrs. Raymond had always fully believed. Vera had seen her years before, and had thought her a terrible woman, quite awful for severity. Miss Nesbitt never visited her niece, Mrs. Raymond, and only permitted visits from her at rare intervals. She told her, with the charming frankness common to rich relations, that if she (Mrs. R.) were not the most tremendous fool in the world, she would have been the greatest rogue, for she had not a bit of true honour. Still she sent her money sometimes, and Mrs. Raymond bore her cynicism for the sake of the material aid.

So, now, in the midst of the beautiful September month, Vera was under the old lady's roof; but her reception made her hope that, after all, life would be more endurable than when exposed to her mother's petty persecutions. Aunt Nesbitt looked as determined as a rock, capable of passing sentence on a guilty person, and hanging the criminal with her own hands; but she evidently would attempt no small tyranny, and Vera could bear anything better than nagging. Her mother was an adept at *that*.

Vera did not see her aunt again until dinner-time. She appeared in the dining-room as carefully dressed as if she had expected to meet a dozen people. Miss Nesbitt had also dressed.

The old lady talked cheerfully, as she might to any young lady visitor; and Vera thoroughly enjoyed her quaint stories and sarcastic views of men and women in general.

"Hum!" said the old lady, at last, "I think you must mean mischief, Mademoiselle my niece."

"You said all girls meant it," said Vera.

"Jane went about in a dressing-gown with her hair down her back for a week," pursued the old lady. "She looked very like Juliet. She repeated poetry, and strolled out at night to stare at the moon. The only result was a cold in the head, succeeded by a swollen face."

"Ah. I am too vain to run those risks," said Vera.

"Josephine had hysterics at all kinds of unseasonable hours," continued Aunt Nesbitt. "She lived on green tea without milk; and thought she must poison herself with red ink. Once my maid woke me in the middle of the night, to say that Miss Raymond was standing at the open staircase window, threatening to throw herself down, the house-keeper, in tears, holding her back."

"What did you do?" asked Vera.

"Went upstairs—sent the servants down. 'You shan't stop me, I will die,' shrieked the heroine. 'Die,' said I, 'why not? Good-bye, my love, I hope we shall meet in heaven! Come! why don't you jump?'"

Vera laughed. "What next, aunt?"

"She did not attempt to do it; she fainted instead on the window-seat—or pretended to. I pinched her, and shook her, and slapped her, all to bring her to. Up she got; flew into her room like a lamp-lighter, and locked the door. She never got me out of bed again in the middle of the night, I assure you."

"It is plain that I cannot do anything in the romantic line," observed Vera. "I will not copy either of them; I must think of something original."

The evening passed very well. The pleasant calm was a relief, after all Vera had gone through with her mother. She made tea for Miss Nesbitt, she played the piano at her request, read aloud, and was sent off to bed early.

Vera had told herself she would not weep again for a long time; but she passed a bad night nevertheless. Would they be all too strong for her?

A day or two elapsed. Not another word spoke Miss Nesbitt about the matter that had sent Vera to her care. One morning the letters came in while they were at breakfast. Miss Nesbitt looked to see if the girl seemed disappointed because there were none for her.

"Vera," said she, "few women can keep a promise. Can you?"

A strange smile flitted over Vera's lips. Aunt Nesbitt understood that it meant, "I have made one promise I mean to keep."

Miss Nesbitt considered a little. Was this just girlish obstinacy, or was it a woman's firm resolve?

"Vera," she continued, "I hate to be bored by watching and spying. Will you engage neither to receive letters from nor to send any to that nice young man of yours, who has caused all this trouble?"

"I had to promise that I would not write to let him know where I am, and I must perforce keep the promise," answered Vera with flashing eyes and quivering lips. "I have some honour within me, Aunt Nesbitt."

"Should he find out where you are, and come here, will you promise not to hold any stolen interview?"

"I would see him, if I could," replied Vera, quietly. "But you need not be afraid. He has gone to India."

"Gone to India?"

"When the explosion came, he said it was the only thing left for him to do. Somebody undertook to get him a berth there."

"Ah, yes!" cried Aunt Nesbitt. "The old story! He is to make a fortune, and come back. Let me see—you may expect to meet him when you are about forty-two."

"I can wait," said Vera.

"Though it is more probable you will hear of his return in a year and a half, with an heiress for a wife," added Miss Nesbitt, opening her letters.

"Did any man ever treat *you* so?" demanded Vera, too angry to think what might be the consequences of arousing the old lady's anger.

Miss Nesbitt laid down her letter, leaned her hands on the table, and looked her niece through and through with her steely grey eyes.

"Yes," she answered, slowly; "a man did treat me so. Exactly in that way. Are you satisfied now? Will you admit that I have some right to doubt young men—young women, too?"

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed the impulsive girl. "Indeed, indeed, I am sorry!"

"There's no harm done," said Miss Nesbitt, in an odd tone. "Vera, you are the only human being that ever heard my secret. I don't know why I answered you. I ought to have boxed your ears."

"I wish you would—I deserve it," cried Vera.

"I never box anybody's ears, unless they tread on Seraph's tail," said Aunt Nesbitt, stroking the head of a beautiful Angora cat, that sat on a chair by her side. "But I am sixty-two—women don't have feelings at that age. It is only pretty Juliets of eighteen who can indulge in such luxuries."

Vera could not decide at that moment whether she liked or detested Aunt Nesbitt; at all events, she was suddenly interested in her. She wished she dared ask questions about the long-lost romance; which Vera felt held a profound tragedy under it.

"I was very rude," she said. "I have grown irritable. I—I have had a good deal to make me so."

Miss Nesbitt quite believed that; knowing well Mrs. Raymond's talents in the science of nagging.

"We will not quarrel while you stay, Vera," was all her answer.

"How long will you keep me?" asked Vera.

Miss Nesbitt shrugged her shoulders, and the old provoking, ironical expression crossed her face.

"Until you are cured, were the orders of your mother. But I have neither a Mr. Musters nor any other desirable gentleman on hand at present."

"It is rather a gloomy prospect for you, Aunt Nesbitt."

"I never despair."

"I shall be twenty-one in less than three years," observed Vera.

"Just so," replied her great-aunt. "What then?"

"I shall have some money of my own. I can set up a school, and make more."

"That would be dreadfully prosaic," sighed Miss Nesbitt. "You had better marry Mr. Osborne."

"I can't have two husbands. I mean to marry Moore Rivington!" Her voice faltered a little over the name.

"Just so," said her aunt. "Let me see. By the time you are forty-seven, you can write and tell him you have made so much money you are quite rich."

"I should do so," replied Vera. "But it may come before then. If not—he will wait for me."

Aunt Nesbitt took up a newspaper, and seemed busy with it. She was secretly watching the girl. How the sight of her brought her own youth back! Vera was so like what she had been—it was like watching the ghost of her own girlhood to look at her. Presently Miss Nesbitt rose and left the room in silence. She wanted to be alone. The iron composure which life had taught her had not been so shaken for years.

"If they could both hold firm," she said to herself. "But that is impossible. A lifetime of working and waiting!"

Three months sped away. Aunt and niece got on very well together; at least each had learned to like the other; but there was never any demonstration of affection. I should employ a stronger word where old Veronica Nesbitt was concerned. Her heart had softened towards the girl as it had not done of late years to any human creature. She took a pleasure in her beauty; she admired her talents and her resolute character; she fairly wondered at her own fondness, but she made no sign.

And Vera? I think you can imagine what she suffered; but she suffered like a strong woman, not a girl. Indeed, many of her age would have decided she could have no heart, she fought so gallantly and persistently against her pain, showing it not. She would not give way—she would struggle through! She made for herself every amusement and interest possible. She took up the studies of her school-life again: and vague notions of growing rich by them in some way or other did run in her heart. But nevertheless her untoward fate, her disappointment, and her isolated existence told upon her; she grew thin and pale, was unable to eat, and passed night after night in sleepless misery. She must keep her beauty; it was dear to her, because *he* prized it! She would not grow bony, and haggard, and old! He would come to her at last—he should find that the years had no more changed her face

than they had her heart. But still those years seemed so far off as to fill her with dismay.

"Aunt Nesbitt," she said, "I want some bromide of potash, and I want hypophosphites of iron and some soda."

"Bless my ears!" exclaimed Aunt Nesbitt.

"I have no money: will you buy them? I have no appetite. I can't sleep."

"That's according to all rules of romance," said the old lady.

"I told you I was vain," went on Vera. "I do not care to grow ugly. I mean to keep my good looks until I am forty-seven."

"I will buy you a ton of soda and the other stuff," said Miss Nesbitt. "But you are a disappointment to me, Vera: you are not a bit of a heroine."

"I am not a heroine: I am a woman; that's better," returned Vera.

Miss Nesbitt went on with her crochet in silence for some time. She had not been so near shedding tears for twenty years. Suddenly she threw her work on the floor, regardless of the havoc Seraph immediately proceeded to make of it. She marched up to Vera, looking as if she were about to bite her; stooped, kissed the girl's forehead, and stalked out of the room. Vera knew now that she had been given a place in that long-sealed heart. She let herself cry a little, glad to be loved. She had no mind to shut her eyes against a gleam of light because she could not have the sun.

The next day was dreary and windy. Vera was sent off several miles in the close carriage to inquire after a sick friend of Aunt Nesbitt's. The old lady had a cold, and did not dare venture out.

As Miss Nesbitt sat alone in the library, an hour later, her footman entered to announce a visitor.

"Who is it?" she asked, with a sniff, not for the visitor, but forced from her by her cold.

"He wouldn't give any name, ma'am; he said you did not know him," was the answer.

"Let him come in," said Miss Nesbitt.

Miss Nesbitt was accustomed to this. Strangers often called upon her to solicit aid for what they generally styled some philanthropic scheme. She expected such a guest now.

As the door opened, she began to sneeze. Nobody sneezed to the extent that Miss Nesbitt did when she had one of these colds.

"Sixteen times," said she, aloud. "I sneezed thirty-four this morning without stopping."

She looked up, and saw before her a young man with one of the finest, grandest faces she had ever set eyes on. She was so surprised that she thought aloud.

"You cannot be a philanthropist!"

"On the contrary," said her visitor, with a pleasant laugh, "I am the most selfish man alive."

"I always wanted to see *him*," replied the old lady, not in the least abashed. "Pray sit down."

"I must tell you my name first, madam. Perhaps when you have heard it you will regret your invitation."

"Dear me, who are you? Mephistopheles, or the—the—— It would not be polite to name him."

"I am Moore Rivington."

"The deuce you are," thought surprised Aunt Nesbitt.

"I have only lately discovered that—that Miss Raymond was here."

"I thought you were safe in India, sir."

"The appointment I expected was delayed. I am really going now; but I could not resist the temptation of coming here first. I wished to see you, madam; and ——"

"You cannot see *her*," again interrupted Miss Nesbitt. "I promised her mother that."

He rose, and began walking excitedly up and down; commencing several sentences, and finishing none.

"Sit down," said the old lady. "You fidget me! Sit down! We will each hear what the other has to say."

Even this was better than Mr. Rivington had expected. He sat down and spent a long hour with her. When he took his leave, he looked happier, though forced to go without seeing Vera.

The next morning Miss Nesbitt handed Vera a note. "Go to your room and read it," she said. "Ask me no questions, for I've nothing to tell."

Vera knew the handwriting. Her hands and heart alike trembled as she opened the note. It was but a few lines of farewell; a promise to be true, and all that. Miss Nesbitt had so far relented as to allow him to write it; but she would not break her promise to Mrs. Raymond, and he had left without seeing Vera.

The letter was something, however. Vera's eyes, as she read it, were blinded by happy tears.

"Yes, I will be true to you, Moore! True for ever."

* * * * *

Two years passed away! Two whole years! Vera remained by choice with Miss Nesbitt. The time sped on slowly, very slowly to Vera; but she never despaired and never doubted. Moore Rivington's name was never mentioned between aunt and niece; but Miss Nesbitt knew that the girl had not changed.

Once they were surprised by a visit from Mrs. Raymond. But she could not get Vera to go back with her—which had no doubt been the object of her unexpected descent.

Within a month of her departure, there came two letters from her, one to Miss Nesbitt, one to Vera, and a local newspaper. In the newspaper was the announcement of Moore Rivington's marriage in India; and the letters confirmed it and gave a few particulars. The young bride was an heiress.

"I hope you will come to your senses now, Vera," wrote, somewhat heartlessly, Mrs. Raymond. "I trust you have some gleam of womanly pride left. Mr. Osborne is still free; he asks after you often. I attempt no persuasion; I know your obstinacy too well."

The letter to Miss Nesbitt pointed out that she was the only person who could influence Vera; and begged her to try to show Vera how wise it would be to take this rich man.

Miss Nesbitt received these letters in the morning. At night she spoke to Vera; and Vera listened, white and cold as a marble image.

"Please to let me alone," was all she said. "Don't be afraid; I shall bear it. I could not have believed it; I can hardly believe it; but I suppose it is true. You lived, Aunt Nesbitt; I shall live. Death is very cruel; it will not come to those who want it."

Before she went to rest, Miss Nesbitt wrote a letter to Moore Rivington—for she knew his address. Her letter was very curt:

"Moore Rivington—I shall expect the money I entrusted you with to be paid back to my bankers without delay. I congratulate you on your marriage, and wish you just the happiness you deserve."

She was not surprised. When she found that Vera proved faithful to her love, she had known, she said now, that the man would fail.

"Fate likes to arrange matters so," she thought. "Truth and falsehood mostly get thrown together. There must always be one heart broken."

A week later Miss Nesbitt went abroad with her grand-niece.

Miss Nesbitt took Vera straight to Italy. I cannot describe to you the six months that followed. Vera had not even the comfort of being ill—there are crises in life where physical pain and weakness become a blessing—no such relief reached Vera. She maintained an utter silence in regard to herself. Even Aunt Nesbitt dared not intrude upon her sorrow. She never looked in the girl's face without a pang at the change. It was not that Vera grew thin, or pale, or ugly. She had never been so beautiful. But, oh! the utter hopelessness, the lack of purpose, the terrible inanition. Aunt Nesbitt read it all. She knew this was a wound which would never heal. Vera might live to have a sort of stony crust grow over her broken heart, but the wound would burn and ache under it. No confidences took place between them. What could be said? Now and then, in the middle of the night, Miss Nesbitt would be roused from sleep by Vera's entrance into the room, and at those moments Miss Nesbitt feared for the girl's mind.

"Tell me again that it is true," she would whisper. "Let me hear you say it, for I cannot believe—I cannot believe."

What passed during these night-watches made no difference in their lives. The interludes were never alluded to after: it would seem that Vera herself did not remember them. Miss Nesbitt felt as if she were living her own awful grief over again, old as she was.

From Rome to Naples, on to Sicily, with a pleasant party which they joined: up by steamer to Genoa; by the Corniche road to Nice. It was June, then; lovely June. They stayed in Florence for awhile; and then went over the St. Gothard into Switzerland.

They had been at Interlachen just a week when a telegram from London was delivered to Miss Nesbitt. "Moore Rivington to Miss Nesbitt. — Come to me. They think I am dying." That was all. Save an appended address—a house in some terrace near Hyde Park.

Mr. Rivington might have behaved ill: indeed it was to be hoped some punishment had overtaken him; but Miss Nesbitt was not one to neglect the call of the dying.

"You have some bad news!" cried Vera, as her aunt approached her with the telegram. "Do not hesitate to tell me, aunt. You know now that I can bear anything." And Miss Nesbitt put the telegram into her hands.

"I dreamed last night that he had come," muttered Vera. "I dreamed he had come."

Some blessed vision, it had been, in which he came to claim her; to prove that he had been always faithful! Aunt Nesbitt knew of such dreams; she knew also what the awakening was. What we live through, we men and women!

Vera was past tears. She looked like a ghost; but she could think and act. "We can go to-night," she said. "We can go to-night."

She worked constantly—did half the packing, in spite of Maria's expostulations. At six o'clock they were speeding away.

It was like a horrible nightmare, that journey, to Aunt Nesbitt. What must it have been to Vera? On—on—Strasburg--Paris—down to Calais as fast as steam could carry them.

They had crossed the Channel, and were whirling away towards London. They spoke little; sometimes Aunt Nesbitt held Vera's hand or stroked back her hair, but what words were possible?

"We will go to the Westminster Hotel," Miss Nesbitt said, when the train drew up in Charing Cross Station, and Thomas came round to open the door.

Vera touched her. "No, aunt, no! To him first. Even now we may be too late."

"I am afraid. You are so tired ——"

"To him first," repeated Vera.

"Get a cab for me," Miss Nesbitt said to Thomas. "You and Maria will go to the hotel with the luggage."

Away they drove in the direction given—the house in the terrace near Hyde Park. It was a beautiful morning: Nature looked as cruel as she ever does when we suffer. The carriage stopped at last.

"You must wait here while I go in," Aunt Nesbitt said. "I must see—we can't tell; you might be sent back; she may be here."

"Oh, aunt, let me, let me see him!" implored Vera. "It will be our last meeting on earth." But she sat still in the carriage while her aunt went in.

"Mr. Rivington is better, ma'am," the landlady said, who met her in the hall as the servant opened the door. "Miss Nesbitt, I think? You are expected."

"Is—is— Who is with him?" asked Miss Nesbitt.

"Only the nurse."

"Where is his wife—that she's not with him?"

"His wife! Dear ma'am! Mr. Rivington has no wife. He is not married."

Aunt Nesbitt walked into the sick-room, nodding her head in self-communing. A word with the patient, and she returned to bring Vera.

"It was all a lie, my dear," she said; "we have been worrying ourselves for naught. I thought when I volunteered to help him with that money that I could not be mistaken in him. He is very ill, but he is not married: never has been. And I'd lay my life that the report was concocted by your worthy mother."

They went to the shaded room. On the bed lay a pale, wasted form; his feeble arm stretched out in welcome.

"Vera, Vera!"

Vera knelt down and laid her head upon his bosom. The arms fell; not clasping her, and she looked up. He had fainted. But Vera's ever-haunting dream was realized: Moore had come back to her.

It was that curt letter of Miss Nesbitt's that had brought him home. He was prospering in India beyond his most sanguine expectations; but when that letter came, he sailed for home as soon as his business affairs allowed him, and was taken ill en route.

Miss Nesbitt had him moved to her own home, and she nursed him back to health, Vera helping. Miss Nesbitt gave more substantial help than that: she settled a good income on Vera. And the wedding took place: Mrs. Raymond having the grace not to oppose it.

"I don't like to part with her, Moore," said Miss Nesbitt, "but what must be, must be. And when the large fortune you talk of is made, out there; mind and don't be above a year or two over it; you must both come home again and live near me."

"Yes, dear Aunt Nesbitt, we will," said Moore. "It is a bargain."

POLLY.

THERE are many mysteries in the world. Perhaps nothing is more strange, however, than the large amount of happiness to be found existing often amongst persons living in abject penury, and even in degradation.

It is probable that nowhere could two happier children be discovered than were Julie and Polly Grimes, the daughters of a dishonest, consumptive rag and bone collector. They were themselves walking advertisements of their father's trade. The meagre fare upon which they existed gave them gaunt figures and sharp, eager faces; while their dress was of that description with which a farmer clothes a scarecrow for his newly planted cornfield. Nevertheless their laughter was gay and incessant, and life was to them one continual frolic. They loved their father, and were too well used to his state of health, too young and ignorant, to be alarmed at it. They were sufficient companions to each other. They enjoyed a continual change of scene.

Even that delight of childish hearts, a pet, was not wanting to these children. They had Jack, the donkey, in whose welfare they felt all the pleasure of ownership and patronage, his chief food consisting of the bundles of dewy grass they stole for him, in the twilight of early morning and late eve. It was a pity that these predatory excursions were so criminal and unlawful. There was such an exquisite excitement in clambering over fences, in search of the richest, freshest grass, and in lying down, shaking with smothered laughter, under some sheltering hedge or haystack, whenever a footstep was heard approaching. Then there was the ever new pleasure of watching Jack cock his ears, and shake his head, in anticipatory delight at his coming feast, and of obliging him to submit to ecstatic hugs and kisses before he exchanged the joy of expectation for the placid happiness of luxurious munching. Many a day, when the supply of grass fell short, through any accident, the girls curtailed their own scanty meals by sparing a crust or two for their grateful favourite.

Their father had his pet too. This was an old Æolian harp, of which he had for years been the possessor, but which he had originally stolen from the window of a gentleman's house, whither he had been attracted by the wild melody proceeding from such an insignificant-looking oblong box. In all his various journeyings it was the careful stowing away of this, in his dilapidated little cart, that received his most particular attention. He would far rather have lost one of his precious sacks of rags—although for each of these he would receive at the rag-store at least six shillings—than that the slightest injury should befall his

much loved treasure. When hiring his wretched lodgings he always made it a matter of primary importance that the room he took for himself and his little daughters should have a window large enough to admit of his harp being placed in it. This passion of his for music had, at least, the one advantage of securing the entrance of a current of fresh air into his wretched dwelling.

The vagrants had taken up their abode in a certain large city, which was pronounced to be "a very nice place" by the elder girl Julie. This somewhat peculiar title by which she was designated was but the familiar abridgment of the rather romantic name of Juliet, which was hers by right. Julie found herself welcomed and made much of in the city at an institution which she called the "Penny Cake School," as she there daily received a bun and instruction in reading and writing—"all for nothing," as she joyfully explained at home. There was but one drawback to her happiness. By no coaxing or highly coloured description of the delights of her novel experiences could she induce Polly to accompany her to the school. After some weeks she was given a suit of clothes for herself, and, by an artfully pathetic account of how she had a little sister at home who would so like to come and be taught, but who was quite ashamed to appear before the ladies, as she had nothing but rags to wear, she worked upon the feelings of one of her charitable patronesses, and received from her an entire suit for Polly also, on the condition that the two should certainly appear together at the school next morning.

I cannot convey any adequate idea of the joy swelling at the hearts and sparkling in the eyes of the children as they surveyed the comfortable, respectable clothes provided for their use. Nothing was wanting. For the first time in their lives they were to be actually dressed all over, even to the matter of shoes and stockings. In the excitement of that happy moment of supreme good fortune Polly promised faithfully to go to school next day.

Their feminine hearts desired but one thing more, namely some little touch of colour, to make them smart as well as respectable. Their father was away on one of his many tours in search of booty. They had the little room all to themselves. There were two sacks, nearly full of rags, in one corner, and these they now emptied out upon the floor. After much searching they found some little pieces of ribbon and imitation lace, out of which they constructed bows to wear at their necks.

They were up with the sun next day, so as to get early through their morning's work and thus be able to begin their toilettes betimes. The ghost of a smile lit up the pale, grim face of their father when they stood before him fully arrayed. And, indeed, the younger child, at any rate, made a pretty picture for the eye to rest upon. Julie was somewhat like a gipsy, and had a famished, eager look in her dark eyes; but

Polly's eyes were of that celestial blue colour seen only, as a general rule, in the eyes of very young children and of placid wax dolls. Their expression was, however, now the most remarkable thing about the child. She looked at her father with an abstracted, intense gaze, whilst the corners of her sensitive little mouth twitched. The blue veins in her forehead, now pure and white, if it had never been so before, swelled and throbbed as the blood rushed through them. There was on her a shadow of the coming terrors of appearing amongst all the strangers in the school-room. "God bless ye, children," Grimes said, stroking her fair soft hair. As the children could not remember to have ever before heard him use his Creator's name, except to add emphasis to some curse, they were deeply impressed by his solemnity. Before starting they ran out into the little yard to show themselves to Jack. "He don't know us, Julie," gasped Polly, in an ecstasy of delight, throwing herself on her phlegmatic friend's neck, regardless of her finery.

The two at last set out on their walk, but at every step Polly's courage sank lower and lower. She began to lag behind her sister, and finally asked, in a weak little voice, if they were near "it." Julie said they were.

"I has a great pain in my leg," sighed Polly.

"Never mind," replied Julie, catching her by the hand, and drawing her on a few paces. But the child resisted.

"Julie," she cried, solemnly, "I'se got a very bad pain in my other leg now, and I can't walk any more."

"But we are just there now. See, it is only round the next street," argued the elder girl.

"But I feel very bad, and very sick, and I can't go, and I won't," sobbed the child, covering her face with her hands, and standing still.

"But I say 'tis like thieving, if you won't come to the school, when I promised the lady, and got you the clothes," Julie said, indignantly. "And oh, Polly, I'se so lonely without you. Now will you come?"

But Polly would not go. Forgetting the pain in her legs, she ran away towards home as fast as she could, while Julie, in distress, loitered outside the school all day, until, at last, her patroness caught sight of her, and, by kind words, won her tale from her. But it is not of Julie that I have to tell.

Polly never slackened speed until she reached an old bridge which was distant but some hundred yards or so from the back street in which her father lodged. Here she paused to take breath and to look about her. It was a lovely autumn morning, and the river gleamed in the sunshine and rippled beneath the breeze. The little girl shook off her terrors and low spirits on the instant, and loitered about, watching a group of children at play, feeling fully conscious of the unwonted magnificence of her own attire. On a sudden a peal of bells began to ring.

Charles Lamb calls the chiming of bells the "music nighest bordering on heaven." Polly never thought of heaven, as she knew nothing at all about it; but she found the bells exercise on her something of the same sort of influence that the *Æolian* harp had exercised years before upon her father. She crept along slowly, nearer and nearer to the place from whence the music came, until she found herself before a great iron gate—the gate of the cathedral. It was locked, however, and she could only look through the railings. Inside she saw waving trees, weeping showers of autumnal tears, and green grass heaving up and down, and adorned with white crosses and great tombs. Above all towered the lofty pile. The little girl's wondering, admiring eyes went up until they rested, fascinated, upon a great golden angel with a raised trumpet at its mouth. She felt sure that the lovely chiming came from this glittering, glorious creation, and her heart swelled with a wild longing to get nearer, by any means. When she found it impossible to enter here, she went up the hill, keeping close to the railings, in the hope of finding some other entrance. She saw a gentleman and lady going in by a small gate higher up; but, alas! they locked the door behind them, and she was again disappointed. She still went on, and, at last, gave a little sigh of joy when she came to a second great iron gate. It was open, and beyond it stood an open door, inside which she crept, all unhindered by a tall verger, before whom she shuddered, fearing a reproof for her temerity.

The chiming of the bells had ceased, but what cared she? Some music, still more lovely, was stealing through the great wide church; and, in the distance, she saw a white-robed procession in the act of breaking up and dispersing its members in various directions. She crept round by the baptistry, wondering much at the great font, in which it was almost possible that a child of her size could have been completely submerged. She paused at last, not far from the choir organ, behind the shelter of a friendly massive pillar, her entranced gaze going up from the worshippers into the mighty dome above their heads, as though it were granted to her to see the church invisible joining with the earthly adorers. She knelt, and stood, and sat, as she saw others doing, but no idea presented itself to her mind as to the significance of any of these acts. She was only conscious of an indefinable, blissful, pleasurable peace, and of an aching dread of the coming moment when she must again go out into the every-day world. As she looked at the choristers her little heart began to swell with a new longing. This was that she herself could be a member of such a band; and this desire was hereafter ever present with her. But little of the service reached her ears distinctly, and to that little those ears were sealed; and yet, no doubt, the subtle essence of the beautiful sentences distilled itself into her being.

In half an hour the whole was over; but Polly would have stayed on

within those lovely walls, wrapped in a trance of delight, had not the verger told her it was time for her to leave the church.

"Oh, sir, will it ever be again? May I come back here some other time?" she said wistfully, grasping his hand, her eagerness overcoming her habitual timidity.

He looked at this strange child with an amused smile.

"You may come again at five," he said, "and every day at ten and five, and three times on Sundays, if you will; but I warrant you'll soon be tired of it, my lassie."

Heaving a sigh that was half a sob, Polly ran away. Although she could find no fitting words in which to express her delight at the elysium into which she had found admittance, she succeeded in inducing Julie to go with her that next evening, to share the renewal of her happiness. But this was the only occasion on which the elder girl ever visited the cathedral. The solemn stillness of the place, which constituted its chief charm to Polly, was to her irksome. In time her kind lady-friend induced her, however, to attend the church and Sunday-school which she herself frequented. God was leading the two children by different roads, although the haven He had in view for both was the same.

But from this time Julie used, with truth, to complain that she had lost her sister. Polly henceforth almost lived entirely either inside the cathedral walls or wandering about outside, gazing up at the golden angel, and at the pinnacles and spires, and listening to the music of the chimes. It caused the child an actual physical pain when she was compelled to leave the precincts of the church; and, by degrees, her whole soul became absorbed in the yearning desire she felt to be left, just for once, in sole possession of the building. She had a prayer to make to the great God, and she fancied He would only heed it if she spoke to Him here and all by herself. It was at night that she specially longed to be alone in the church, as she believed that the golden angel came down in the darkness and sheltered himself within these walls, and she ardently desired to make a nearer acquaintance with him. No idea of fear, in connection with the place, ever entered her mind.

With all these great thoughts swelling at her heart, she went about as one in a dream. Her former gay laugh was now never heard. She slept little, and shared her meals with Jack habitually, even when he was otherwise well supplied. Her blue eyes daily grew larger, her cheeks more white and hollow. She would hide, on Sundays, behind the great western door until the organist and organ-blowers had come down the spiral staircase leading from the organ gallery, in the hope that the tall verger, who was always standing about this end of the church, might overlook her presence, and that she could slip aside, and hide while the church was being locked up: but he never did,

and she was thus always compelled to leave the place before he went away.

About this verger and the dean she had the most wonderful fancies. Although there was really no greater similarity between them than is continually to be observed betwixt master and servant—the greatest point of likeness being that both were alike clean shavers!—to her eyes they were almost one and the same man, and she was quite certain that each took it in turn, day by day, to wear a white surplice, and to take part in the beautiful ceremonial, in which her soul delighted; and her heart throbbed with pity for the grief she conceived each must feel when his alternate day came for acting as verger. This idea of the child's was by no means more far-fetched than are many fancies other children nourish.

Polly got her wish, however, at last, in a strange way. There came some great festival, and when the evening service was over, the choristers all sang that beautiful and inspiring hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The excess of delightful and exquisite bliss into which this threw the child was so great that she fell on her knees in a sort of swoon or trance, and was thus left behind, unnoticed, when all the rest of the congregation dispersed. She knelt on, motionless, behind her great sheltering pillar, while the lights were extinguished, and all the doors locked. When she came to herself, and found she was, at last, actually all alone in the beautiful building, she gave a little sob of delight, and crept out into the nave, and instinctively up, nearer and nearer to the altar, where the highest rites of the church are administered, before making her long delayed petition.

At last she fell down on her face and hands in the gloom within the chancel, or rather within the choir, between the stalls, and prayed half aloud, in solemn, earnest tones: "Oh, very great God, I want so much to ask something. Would you please make me grow into a little boy, and let me wear a white gown, and make me able to sing? Oh! God, if you will do this for me, I will try and be very good, and I won't, oh, indeed I won't, steal any more grass for Jack. But please, very great God, would you make Julie get twice as much, because, if you don't, poor Jack would die."

Here the child's feelings so overpowered her that she burst into an agony of tears. After some little time she sat up, and leaned against the stall at her back, in eager expectation of the arrival of the golden angel. As might be anticipated, she fell fast asleep, and slept on for hours. All of a sudden she awoke. The moon had risen and was looking in at her through an enclosed window, throwing a stream of white, ghostly light across the church. A spasm of terror shot through the little girl's heart, and an overpowering sense of her solitude fell upon her. "Oh, very great God," she cried out, "if the golden angel came in and went away while I was asleep, I am so sorry.

Would you please make him come in again and keep me company, I am so dreadfully lonely."

The great God answered the child's prayer by sending her quietly again into a profound slumber, in which she dreamed that her desire was accomplished. She did not wake again until the church was opened in preparation for the morning's service; when the sexton was, of course, much surprised to find the strange little mortal that he had imprisoned.

Although faint and exhausted from long fasting, Polly did not leave the cathedral until the prayers were over. When she reached her humble little home she found her father had only just returned, after spending hours in vain searching for her, while Julie was in floods of tears at her supposed loss.

"I will have no more of your nonsense from this time out," Grimes said, roughly. "We are leaving the town for good to-morrow."

No one can conceive the feeling of utter desolation and despairing misery that came over Polly when she heard this announcement, and learned that her father's decision was final. To Julie the idea was almost entirely pleasurable: but, to her, the very thought of complete separation from the cathedral was like the rending of soul and body asunder. She would have spent the day in praying to God to avoid the coming calamity, but she did not understand that He would attend to prayers offered in other places as he would to those sent up within His great house, and she was not allowed to escape again to the church even for the evening service.

The little party set out next morning, the precious *Æolian* harp having been carefully enveloped in an empty sack. They all walked, the father leading the donkey, Julie holding the pale, unwilling Polly tightly by the hand. They were nearly a mile out of the town when the sweet cathedral chimes began to ring. As the first sound of their music fell upon the little girl's ears she wrenched her hand out of her sister's grasp, and ran back towards the city, shrieking, "Oh, father; oh, Julie! I can't bear it. I can't go away." Grimes began to curse and swear, declaring that she might go and be hanged, for aught he cared about her any longer; but after while he turned the donkey's head, and retraced his steps.

The morning service was over when he reached the western gate of the cathedral. Leaving Julie in charge of the little cart, he went in through the gate, which was still open, and thence into the church. The Dean, who had unrobed, was standing in the nave, talking in a low voice to the tall verger. Neither of the two saw the man enter, but Polly, who was in hiding, recognised him the instant he appeared, and rushed wildly to the two, whom she regarded as her only protectors, shrieking, "Oh, sirs, sirs, save me from father. He wants to take me away, and I shall die if he does. Oh, sirs, save me."

The Dean looked at Grimes in amazement, and he, in a few angry words, explained that he was leaving the town and that the child refused to go with him. Of course no one could interfere in the matter, and he dragged her out of the cathedral in a passion of tears.

The verger told how Polly had, for the last two months, almost lived in the cathedral, and the Dean was much interested by what he heard of the child. When he came out by the western door, he found he was to see more of the strange pair. The excess of passion into which Grimes had worked himself had brought on bleeding from his lungs, and he was leaning against a tombstone. Polly stood by, much sobered ; but, as she had often seen her father in this state, she imagined he would be all right again when the fit of exhaustion had passed away.

"You can't leave the town to-day, my poor fellow," the Dean said, in pitying tones, and the man assented with a groan. At this moment, as it chanced, a doctor, a friend of the Dean's, drove by the gate. At a beckoning gesture from the clergyman he threw the reins to his servant and came in. He shook his head over the little group, but seemed much interested in the child. He felt her hand, lifted her face, looked into her eyes, and laid his hand upon her forehead. "The man is doomed, of course," he said, turning aside with the Dean ; "and I don't think the child will be long in the world after him. She has the same disease in her, and her brain is curiously overwrought. If they had her in France she could see any amount of visions for them. She has materials in her for anything extraordinary."

Grimes gave the address of the little room which he had so lately left, and to which he now proposed returning, and the gentlemen promised to call and see him next day.

The doctor was right in saying that the child had her father's disease in her ; but he had no foreboding of the rapid strides with which it was to carry her off. When he called next afternoon he found her in the raging fever of what is called "galloping consumption ; she was lying upon a heap of straw, tossing restlessly about in wild delirium. The Dean had already been twice that day to the house, and on his second visit had brought a pillow for the poor little maid's head to rest upon, but she pushed it feebly from her again and again, muttering, "Give it to father, give it to father, he wants it most." Grimes was sitting in the window of the small room, his whole soul seemingly engrossed in listening for the wild chords of melody swept out of his harp occasionally by the passing breeze.

"My robe, my robe shall be pure and white," muttered the child, as the doctor took her little hand in his.

"What is she saying?" he asked curiously of the elder girl, who stood by weeping ; but, as if in answer, Polly repeated clearly and distinctly :

"My robe, my robe shall be pure and white ;
 No spot or stain shall it ever bear :
 For the streets of the city are golden bright,
 And the travellers' feet are all clean there."

"It is a hymn I taught her, sir, that I learned at the school," sobbed Julie.

The Dean called again later in the day. Polly was then sensible, and murmured, with timid uneasiness, that she wanted him so much to do something for her. He knelt down beside her, and asked her to tell him what it was ; but she could only get as far with her request as, "When next it is your turn, sir, will you ask ——"

He could not, of course, conceive what she meant by his next turn ; but her wistful eagerness, and yet inability to get out her petition, was deeply painful to him to witness. At last Julie interfered.

"I know what she wants, sir ; shall I tell him, Polly?"

Polly nodded a feeble assent, turning her entreating eyes back again on the kneeling clergyman's face.

"Oh, sir," said Julie, "she wants you to ask God to make her grow into a little boy, and to give her a white gown to wear, and to make her able to sing. And oh, sir, do you think will He do it for her?"

The Dean did not know well what to say, with those wistful eyes waiting for his answer so eagerly ; but a verse of sacred poetry came into his mind on the instant, and half unconsciously he repeated it aloud. Polly's lids drooped, and she seemed to slumber, as the soothing voice ceased uttering the slow, measured lines :

"Thine eyes shall look upon the beauteous King,
 Thy feet shall tread upon the promised land ;
 An angel bright to thee a crown shall bring,
 The Lord shall reach thee out a shining hand ;
 And thou shalt stand beside the Father's throne,
 And sing the praises of the Three in One."

When he called next day, the child was again unconscious, but her delirium, no longer that of fever, was of weakness and exhaustion.

The Dean saw that the little maid was quickly passing away, and a sudden thought struck him.

"Have these children ever been baptised?" he asked.

"One of 'em was," Grimes said indifferently—"Julie there. Her mother was alive then ; but she died when the young 'un was born, and I didn't see as how it mattered much."

The Dean got a bowl of pure water, and went through part of the baptismal service. When he marked the cross upon the child's forehead she opened her eyes with a smile. "Oh, sir, the golden angel!" she cried, and fell over on her face and hands.

When Julie raised her up there was no longer a soul in the frail little body.

THE LOST BRIDAL GIFT.

"IT is very nice to be married and settled in a house of one's own!"

So spoke young Mrs. Clinton, the first week she was settled in hers. Her husband, a struggling young lawyer, whose office was in the heart of the quiet country village that had been the home always of both of them, was away at the said office, and the young wife was alone.

Neither of them was over-burthened with this world's goods. But they had resolved to marry and struggle along together, rather than wait apart until they were old and rich. He would strive to steadily make money; she to be economical and saving at home, and so make both ends meet. It might not be amiss if some other young ladies and gentlemen of the present day tried the same.

Tom Clinton took his wife home: and here she was, setting about her duties with a good heart, and intending to become the most active little housewife in the world. Of course she began by superintending the cookery: the young maid seemed good for little but to make beds, and stare at her pretty new mistress.

Such meals! Such dainty little dishes put upon the table, made up after the best receipts in the new cookery-book! Why is it that these said cookery-books tell so little, compared with what they might. They run after this fashion.

"To cook salmon. Boil it till it's done. Serve with lobster-sauce and sliced cucumber."

"Good gracious!" cried poor Mrs. Clinton, "I wonder *how long* it must be boiled; and whether it should be put into cold or hot water!"

Neither maid nor mistress knew. But difficulties are soon surmounted when hearts and hands are willing. Sometimes, though, the young wife caught herself wishing that she and Tom had rather more ready money.

Very active was she: untiring, and full of hope and spirits. All the best of the furniture she dusted herself, and then there was no fear that their pretty ornaments and presents would get broken.

One piece of their rather small stock of furniture was an old bureau, or rather bureau and desk combined, which was filled with small drawers, pigeon-holes, &c. This had belonged to Tom Clinton's grandfather, and was handed down to Tom as an heirloom. Eunice Clinton had looked through it every day since she came home, and yet found something to admire and to wonder over. For she liked those capacious old things of carved oak, which must have been valuable in their day, if old-fashioned now. Tom had shown her two secret receptacles for

papers, placed beneath the small drawers : and one day Eunice found a prize. She had taken out a remote drawer for the purpose of dusting it, when she noticed a small drawer yet behind it. Of course, she opened this at once, and there found, wrapped in a piece of old yellow paper, a silver watch. It was very old and battered, the hands were broken off, and it had no glass. She took it up and shook it, but it did not tick in answer to the shake, as, no doubt, a well-regulated watch ought to do : it only rattled, as though the inside works were all loose and broken. She tried to open it, and got the outer case off without trouble ; but the watch itself resisted all her efforts. It seemed never to have had an opening yet.

How was it Tom had never found this, she wondered. But Tom Clinton had no genius for exploring old places as she had. The probability was, Tom had never looked thoroughly into it since the piece of furniture came to him : and, besides, Tom could never see a thing though it stared him in the face. How she wished Tom had been at home when she found this watch ! it would be so long to wait until dinner-time. How she would plague him ! To be sure, it was no treasure such as she had read of, concealed in just such places—nothing but an old turnip-shaped, silver, or perhaps a pewter, watch.

Eunice quitted the watch and the bureau, and went singing about the house for an hour or so, trying hard not to feel dull ; but the day appeared unusually long. She had no sewing to do—young wives seldom have ; and she wished again that the hours would pass and dinner-time come. Looking from the window, she espied a pedlar with a monstrous pack on his back, coming up the village street.

Now, did you ever know a woman who did not like to deal with a pedlar if they had a sly chance ? At any rate, Mrs. Clinton, so much at a loss what to do with her time that day, did not send him away when he came to the door. Sarah wanted some new coloured aprons, and perhaps he had just the print that would suit. Pedlars in country districts are no uncommon visitors, and are not altogether unknown in superior houses.

The pedlar was allowed to enter the small, neat dining-room : and soon every chair and table it contained was covered with articles from the pack. The more Mrs. Clinton told the man she did not want to see all these things, the more of them he kept spreading out.

Our young housekeeper was sorely tried. She had very little money in the house, and well she knew Tom's purse was low just now. She took two aprons for Sarah, and a neat handkerchief that was cheap ; and no more. The polite pedlar talked and flattered all in vain ; Eunice was firm, she must not think of those pink ribbons, that fine neat chintz. Oh, how she did wish for plenty of money ! She could not bear to see him folding up all those pretty things, "and so cheap too." As the pedlar, with much remonstrance, finally put up the last

of his goods, he took out a small tin case, and, opening it, showed a set of very handsome silver tea-spoons.

The very things she had secretly longed for! The truth was, all their little store of plate was but Birmingham plate, and she had so wished for just a few tea-spoons in silver.

The pedlar saw at once that the spoons had caught her eye, and he handed them to her, saying—"Now, madam, here is the last set of spoons I have, and you shall have them a bargain. Feel their weight—the best of pure silver; and there's a place, you see, for the engraving of your name. Do you fear they are not real? Look at the mark."

Mrs. Clinton did not fear that: she knew silver when she saw it.

"Yes, they are very nice, very tempting: but I have not the money," said poor Eunice, looking longingly at the much coveted spoons.

"What of that?" cried the pedlar, "you can borrow of some one, surely. Or I will take any old silver, or gold, or clothing you may have to spare."

Eunice caught at the words *old silver*, and thought of the watch she had discovered only an hour before. She went to the drawer, and holding it out to him, said, "What will you allow me for this?"

The pedlar took the watch in his hand, and went to the door, as if to examine it better by the light. While Eunice, trembling, she knew not why, gazed at the coveted spoons.

"I cannot give you more than twenty shillings for this," he said, "and it is not worth that."

Eunice felt her heart sink; she had but twelve shillings in the house, and she *must* have the spoons. Tom knew nothing of the watch; and, of course, he would not care what was done with that old battered thing. But the watch and her twelve shillings would not buy the spoons.

"Have you no old clothes?" asked the man.

No, she had no old clothes, she was about to say; when all at once she remembered a pair of heavy winter pantaloons of Tom's, she had seen hanging up. It would be a long time before winter yet; perhaps Tom might never think of them again; she would get them; if the pedlar would only take them, the spoons were hers!

While she went upstairs, the pedlar took another look at the old watch, opened the inner case, and started to his feet; but instantly sat down again when he heard Mrs. Clinton descending. He seemed in such haste to close the bargain now that he scarcely looked at the winter pantaloons. Flinging them over his arm, he placed the case of spoons within the eager, trembling hands of his young customer, took up his pack and departed.

Mrs. Clinton fairly kissed the spoons. Now she could invite friends

to tea, and not feel ashamed when they surreptitiously glanced at the mark on her silver.

Dinner-time came; the table was laid, and she stood at the window, looking for Tom. For the first time the thought came to her mind "Had she done right?" Could she tell Tom? He might not like it about that watch. And would he make a fuss at her dealing with a pedlar? In the old days she remembered her papa had made a fine to-do when his wife had bought a shawl of one.

Perhaps she had better not show the spoons to Tom just yet. How strange it would be to keep anything back from him! Why, what should she talk about? She could not plague him about her being the first to find any treasure in the old bureau. But there he was, coming! They met with the usual embrace: and Mr. Clinton did not observe any change in his wife until dinner was over, and she came in to sit by him: he fancied then that she was very silent.

Eunice was thinking of the spoons. Somehow she did not take so much pleasure in them as at first. She had laid the little case on the shelf in the cupboard. What if Tom should go there for a glass? He had often done so. She left her seat, put water and glasses on the table, and sat down again.

"What is that water for?" asked Mr. Clinton.

"I thought perhaps you might want some."

"And what has my little wife been doing all the morning?"

"Oh, nothing much; just stirring about, and——"

"And what?" said Tom, drawing her nearer to him. "Have you been overhauling the old desk again, finding old deeds and all sorts of treasures?"

"I fear there will never come any treasures to us," said Eunice, almost sobbing.

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Tom. "Are you tired, my darling?"

Eunice muttered something about "loneliness." Any excuse to save telling of the pedlar and the watch.

"You are tired and nervous, Eunice. Shall we send for one of your sisters to stay here a week or two?"

Eunice fairly burst into tears. She was finding the secret a heavy one, and yet she dared not confess. What would her husband think of her folly? Those horrid spoons! She wished she had never seen them. And then, to account for her low spirits, she said she had a headache.

They fell into easy conversation. Something led the topic to Tom's family; and he told her, for the first time, a long story of his grandfather, his mother's father, who had once been considered very rich indeed. He was a great traveller, and was seldom at home after the death of his wife, who had left him with two children, a son and a daughter, in the fifth year after their marriage.

"The children were left with an old housekeeper, in a beautiful cottage, surrounded by well-cultivated fields, old trees, and an extensive garden," said Tom, recalling reminiscences as he went on. "The garden was the care of the housekeeper's husband, an old Scotchman, who took much delight in it, and was so fond of symmetry that it was of him the story is told which has since become almost a proverb ——"

"What story?" interrupted Eunice, growing interested in the tale.

"I'll tell you," said Tom. "This old Scotchman had a son about the age of his master's son. One day while the master was at home, the young Scot was impudent, or committed some misdemeanor, when his master seized him by the collar, and locked him in the lodge at the gate. Coming out some hours after, my grandfather was surprised to hear his own son crying out from the lodge on the other side the gate. He was also locked in.

"'What does this mean?' he exclaimed, hastily releasing his son and heir, and turning to the gardener for an explanation.

"'Symmetry, sir, symmetry,' said the stolid Scotchman, 'there is nothing like symmetry!' And the answer was so unexpected that the offence was forgiven."

Eunice laughed.

"But the gardener's boy was a wild youth, and soon led his master's son into all sorts of scrapes," resumed Tom. "The master was absent so much of the time, he forgot that his son was growing up and needed a guardian's care. At the age of fifteen both boys left suddenly in the night, after committing some folly in the neighbouring town, and although search was made, they could not be traced. The honest gardener did not admire the 'symmetry' of the thing so much this time. He grieved over the loss of his boy, gave up work, and died just before the return of his master. My grandfather never got over this blow to his pride; he sent his daughter, my dear mother, off to boarding-school, and shut himself up in the once pleasant home, allowing no one to speak to him but his faithful old friend the housekeeper. His son and the other boy were never heard from. It was thought they were both lost at sea."

"What a sad history!" cried Mrs. Clinton.

"The old man, after secluding himself for some years, again started on his travels. This time it was said he went to Brazil. He did not return until my mother was in her twenty-second year. When he did come he was looking old and careworn, and apparently poor. He never made much of his daughter, but settled his affairs, giving the house, furniture, and grounds to his only child, telling her he had a *small* bridal gift ready for her, provided she should marry to please him. What the gift was she could not learn. He had often spent hours at the old desk—that bureau, my dear, that you are so fond of exploring

—and he often gave orders that it should be the first care of any of the household in case of fire, or other accident. Poor old man ! he was found one morning sitting by his favourite desk stiff and stark ; he had evidently died in the night, alone and unheard. Of course, my mother was stunned, but she could not be expected to mourn very deeply the loss of such a parent. He ——”

“And what of the small bridal gift, Tom ?”

“Nothing. There was not one. The old desk was searched, but nothing of value found. Some old letters, papers, and such-like, were there in plenty ; but the promised bridal gift was nowhere to be seen : there or elsewhere.

“My mother married soon afterwards,” continued Mr. Clinton, after a pause : “and I was born in the old home. But alas ! that dear place is mine no longer. After my father’s death it became necessary to sell it for our support, and when I was only fifteen my poor mother died, leaving me nothing but her love and kind precepts and the little that remained of her household furniture, the old bureau-desk among it.”

“It is handsome still, Tom, though it is old.”

“Very handsome. And now, my dear, I must leave you,” he added, “for I have some work to do at the office yet. As to the old bureau, we will still treasure it : for, do you know, I used to fancy there must be some treasure in it, though whence I derived the notion I can’t tell. Of course, you’ll laugh at that, Eunice !”

He went off, laughing himself. Mrs. Clinton gave a sigh of relief, took out the new spoons, and tried hard to take as much delight in them as she had done in the morning. What good could they ever do her if Tom was not to see them ? Even if she should invite company to tea, she would not dare use the spoons ! That old watch was surely no treasure, but she heartily wished for it back again. If she could only take it to Tom, and tell him she had found it in the old desk ! He certainly had never discovered the watch, or he would have mentioned it to her. But a strange repentance clung to her for what she had done ; and for so trifling a matter she really could not tell why it should.

Mrs. Clinton sat back in her chair, and cried harder than she had ever cried before. To think of keeping a secret from Tom : that was what she could not bear ; and yet, to tell him of the bargain—that *she* had dealt with a pedlar—had even chaffered off his winter pantaloons !—how Tom would laugh at her, tell her father and sisters, and—and—well, she would never hear the last of it.

Tom came in to tea, full of news, and quite excited about a man who had been taken suddenly ill at the village inn. “I cannot walk out with you as I promised, Eunice,” said the young lawyer, “for I have to be at the inn at nine o’clock, to make the old fellow’s will. Fancy a pedlar making a will !”

"A pedlar making a will," repeated Eunice, her thoughts running upon *her* pedlar, and feeling somewhat bewildered.

"It's what the landlord said when he came to me at the office. And now I must go. Good-bye, dear."

Mrs. Clinton sat on, in the dusk of the summer's evening. By-and-by a gentleman, whom she slightly knew, came to the house, asked to see her, and addressed her without ceremony.

"Mrs. Clinton, your husband has requested me to call here and ask you to accompany me to the inn. He is engaged there, and could not come for you himself."

Eunice was surprised, but did not hesitate. In another minute, they were walking down the street together. The swinging sign of the Brown Bear was in sight, when it suddenly occurred to the young wife that all this was curious.

Why had Tom sent for her? It was one of Tom's tricks! Some of their friends had come, and were stopping at the Brown Bear! Yes; that must be it.

But she found no friends. She was shown into a parlour, and waited there alone.

Presently Tom came in, looking flurried.

"Eunice," he said, sternly, "was there a pedlar at our house to-day?"

"Ye-es," answered his trembling wife.

"And did you deal with him? What did you give him?"

"Oh, Tom! I have so wanted to tell you!" sobbed Eunice—"but, not here—not now!"

"Yes, *here* and now," returned her husband; "you do not know how much depends on your words."

"Oh, oh!—please Tom, don't look so at me! I only feared you would laugh at me and tease me—and—perhaps not like it. I—I will never do so again."

"Just tell me what you did do," commanded Mr. Clinton.

Eunice, wishing she could sink through the floor, but trying to be brave, now it had come to this, made a clean breast of it—the old watch, pantaloons and all.

Tom stood aghast; then, taking Eunice by the hand, he led her upstairs, to the bedside of the sick man. It was the pedlar of the morning; but alas how changed! A few cases of a sad epidemic, had occurred in the village during the past week; and the pedlar was stricken with it, after eating a very hearty dinner.

The physician who was called in told him he had no chance for life, and the poor man sent at once for Mr. Clinton; asking for him as "the husband of the lady who lived in the white house at the corner." For after his bargain, he had informed himself who the Clintons were.

Tom received the message ; and, like all young lawyers, on the look-out for practice, he responded to it with eagerness : and before the time appointed, appeared at the bedside of the sick man. What was his surprise to hear, between groans and paroxysms of pain, an unintelligible tale of spoons, watch, pantaloons, and his wife.

For a time he could not understand ; and when he did understand, could not believe. His refined young wife dealing with a travelling pedlar ! But the pedlar kept asking to have the lady sent for ; and Tom sent. Now he had heard her story, he awaited the dénouement.

Eunice approached the sick man, trembling. He took something from between the bed and mattress, held it a moment, then placed it in the lady's hand.

"I am dying," he said ; "they tell me I am dying ; and I want you to forgive me, for I cheated you this morning, and the Lord has laid his hand upon me—my sins have found me out. Here is the watch ; take it, and *all that is in it* ! I do not know what it is worth, but the spoons would never pay for it. Keep them, and pray for me. Oh, pray for me !" And the poor man rolled in agony.

Mr. Clinton took his wife downstairs, and out into the street, hurrying her along without speaking, until they reached their own gate. "Go in, now, darling," he said, "and I will go for old Dr. Ray ; I have more faith in him ; he may be able to help the man yet." So saying, he hurried away, leaving his wife standing at the gate, clutching the old silver watch in her hand.

She went slowly into the house, lighted the lamp, and once more tried to examine the watch.

"What can there be about this old thing to cause so much grief and remorse to that poor man, I wonder?" she cried, in her bewildered confusion. "I cannot get that dying man out of my thoughts." But the watch would not open. It could not be that. Then the thought struck her that there might have been something valuable in the pockets of those pantaloons. She had not looked before she gave them — and they were still at the Brown Bear. Getting out the case of spoons, she placed them, with the old watch, on the table, and waited for Tom.

She had not long to wait ; he came in, wiping the perspiration from his white forehead, for the evening was warm and he had walked fast. He had left the old doctor with the sick man, and hurried back to his wife, for he longed to have the events of the day and night thoroughly explained. After kissing Eunice, who clung to him like a frightened child, he took up the old battered watch, and said, "Now, dear, show me where in the desk you found this."

Eunice went to the desk, took out the drawer, then the one at the back of it, in which yet remained the old paper wrapper.

Mr. Clinton seized upon this at once, examined it carefully, and then looked up with a suppressed, eager smile.

"Eunice, the long-lost bridal gift is found at last!"

And sure enough, the little yellow paper told it all. A very valuable diamond was concealed in the interior of the battered watch; a diamond that was almost priceless. The son's young wife had found what the poor mother had so long searched for—the splendid bridal gift that the old man had died without bestowing.

"No more struggles, Eunice," said Mr. Clinton, with heartfelt satisfaction; "no more need for my little wife to roast her face over the kitchen fire, or to debar herself innocent pleasures, because they would cost shillings and sixpences."

And Eunice burst into a storm of happy tears, and cried on his arm.

And in time, while Tom went plodding on, making himself into a renowned lawyer, little children played in the pretty garden, and climbed on papa's knee, and begged to hear again and again the pretty story of the lost diamond.

Nor must I fail to tell of the recovery of the poor frightened pedlar. Dr. Ray had him up and about in no time, and his first walk was to the "white house" in the corner, again begging Mrs. Clinton to accept the spoons as a small gift, and as having been the means of making an honest man of him.

There was no cheat in those spoons. They were real silver; and they are still in the family, with the name "Eunice" engraved on each, and they are called "the diamond spoons." The pedlar owned that he suspected something when he shook the old watch and heard a peculiar rattle, and when he caught a glimpse of the sparkling jewel, it dazzled his eyes, and he never waited to look at the pantaloons which were brought out by the young, thoughtless wife to complete the sum required, although he found on looking at them that they alone were well worth the price of the spoons.

"You see, Eunice, how you were robbing me," her husband would say, with grave lips and laughing eyes. "What would your poor husband have done when winter came, and the chilly winds did blow, without any thick trousers to put on?"

AN ENIGMA.

BY DR. LYTH.

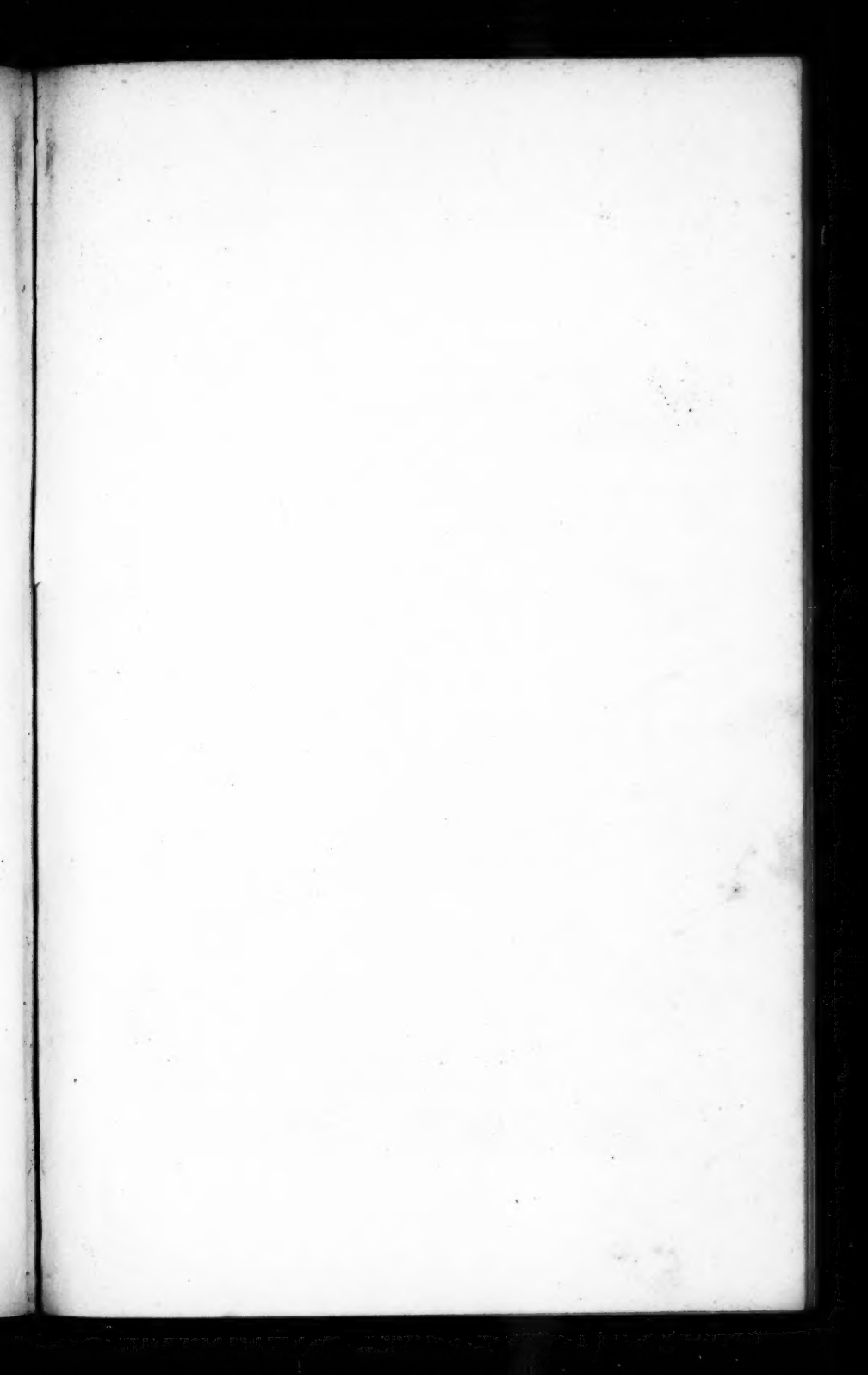
TWIN brothers, of one parent born,
 We march through life together;
 O'er many a brake, at eve and morn,
 In fair and stormy weather.
 We climb the mountain's rocky steep;
 We cross the rapid river,
 The crystal Rhone and the Danube deep,
 The Don and the Guadalquivir.
 We while in many a landscape fair,
 We brave the rolling ocean;
 We float at times in liquid air,
 With a quiet sort of motion.
 In every region desert clime,
 Where happy lovers wander,
 We mark their steps on Alps sublime,
 Or where the vales meander.
 In every age, in right and wrong,
 We have the world supported;
 The noble and the vulgar throng,
 Yea, mighty kings escorted.
 Our sound was heard in Rome and Greece
 And in the halls of Pharaoh;
 In Memphis and Persepolis,
 And by the streams of Marah.
 We're long and short, and black and
 white;
 We're sometimes small and pretty;
 We're steady in the dreadful fight,
 And busy in the city.
 We're young and old; we're slow and
 fast;
 We're feeble, strong, decorous;
 And strange the scenes through which
 we've passed,
 And stranger lie before us.

Merrily, merrily here we go,
 The bright red wine is flowing;
 Wearily, moodily, steady and slow,
 For the rusty wheel is going.

Rapidly, rapidly to and fro,
 The weaver's shuttle is flying;
 Sulkily, lazily, heel and toe,
 The slave his task is plying.
 Madlier whirls the mazy dance,
 With noise of music and tattle;
 Terribly gleams the warrior's glance,
 As he spurs his steed to battle.
 Gallantly onward, all in a row,
 The enemy's ranks are rolling!
 Solemn and slow, the friars go,
 For the funeral bell is tolling.

In many an hour of pomp and pride,
 Of tumult, strife, or sorrow,
 We've shared our fortune side by side,
 Forgetful of the morrow.
 We move together, yet alone,
 As fancy wills or reason;
 Backwards and forwards, up and down,
 Both in and out of season.
 We bring the news, we bear the dead,
 We carry many a burden;
 With bitter toil we earn our bread,
 And never ask a guerdon.
 Contented when our work is done,
 To rest without a pillow;
 Perchance beneath a burning sun,
 Perchance above the billow.
 From north and south, from east and
 west,
 Through tempest, fire, and water,
 We go to seek our final rest,
 With many a patient martyr.
 Soon time shall cease, and all things end,
 This globe itself shall perish;
 But we the gorgeous scene attend;
 This certain hope we cherish.
 The great archangel then shall stand,
 So reads prophetic story,
 One foot on sea, and one on land,
 But we shall share his glory.

* * The answer will be found next month at the end of the *Index* to the present volume.





A. HOPKINS.

DISCOVERED.

J. SWAIR.